The Book of Reason

Sahîh Al-Bukhâri

The End of a Legend

SAHIH AL-BUKHARI:
THE END OF A LEGEND

Rachid Aylal

Translator’s Preface

It is with great responsibility and profound respect that I present the English translation of *Sahih al-Bukhari: The End of a Legend* by Rachid Aylal. This book delves into one of the most intricate and debated areas of Islamic scholarship, challenging the traditional narratives surrounding *Sahih al-Bukhari*. As a translator, my aim has been to faithfully convey the author’s arguments and insights while ensuring that they resonate with an English-speaking audience.

The importance of this work cannot be overstated. It arrives at a critical juncture in contemporary Islamic discourse, where the examination of religious texts through the lenses of reason, history, and critical methodology has gained momentum. The author's rigorous analysis offers readers an opportunity to explore this pivotal subject from a fresh perspective, raising questions about the authenticity, origins, and impact of *Sahih al-Bukhari* on Islamic jurisprudence and belief.

In undertaking this translation, I faced the delicate challenge of maintaining a balance between the precise and poetic nature of the original Arabic text and the clarity demanded by modern English readers. Arabic, as a language, allows for intricate rhetorical flourishes and profound subtleties, which are integral to the author’s arguments. Translating these nuances into English required careful consideration to preserve the integrity and depth of the original while ensuring accessibility.

Readers will notice that certain Arabic terms are retained in the text, such as *hadith*, *sunnah*, and *ummah*. These terms carry complex meanings that are often difficult to encapsulate in a single English word without losing cultural or religious significance. Footnotes are provided to aid readers unfamiliar with these concepts.

Furthermore, while the author’s critiques are framed in bold and uncompromising language, they remain rooted in an earnest quest for truth. This spirit of inquiry is one that transcends linguistic and cultural barriers, inviting all readers—regardless of their background—to engage with the material critically and thoughtfully.

This book represents not merely a translation but a bridge between two linguistic and intellectual traditions. My hope is that it will foster dialogue and reflection among scholars, students, and general readers alike.

I express my deepest gratitude to Rachid Aylal for his monumental work and commend his courage in addressing a subject of such profound significance. May this translation serve as a means of fostering understanding, reflection, and progress.

Peace and blessings,

Fatima El-Masri
Berkeley, California
Thursday, December 26, 2024

Dedication

To everyone who has been exhausted by the contradictions and myths of the narratives and has been torn between scrutinizing them or venerating them, I dedicate this book.

The Author

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Praise be to Allah, through Whose blessings righteous deeds are completed, and peace and blessings be upon our noble Messenger Muhammad ibn Abdullah, whom Allah Almighty described by saying:

"And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds." [Surah Al-Anbiya 21:107].

The Islamic world today is witnessing an unprecedented movement in critiquing religious heritage. This movement encompasses a thorough discussion and scrutiny of all narratives attributed to the noble Prophet on a wide scale. These narratives have been subjected to analysis due to their contradictions, myths, and conflicts with reason, logic, and, in many cases, the explicit texts of the Quran.

Moreover, this critique has moved beyond intellectual circles, which include many scholars and researchers, to religious institutions themselves. Within some of these religious bodies—such as Al-Azhar—jurists and hadith scholars have begun scrutinizing these narrations. They examine, accept, reject, and critique them, treating these texts as historical rather than sacred. They have approached them using the same scientific and rational methodologies employed in analyzing historical texts.

What further supports this intellectual movement, especially in critiquing religious heritage, is the unprecedented scientific revolution the world is experiencing today. This revolution has elevated human reason to a position of leadership and prominence in all fields, opening broad horizons of remarkable advancement in various aspects of life. Furthermore, the progress in technological tools and scientific media has enabled humanity to explore the past in its entirety and even to document and disseminate its findings.

The ancient past, as if reliving those bygone eras, has been brought back to life thanks to these means, which also helped verify the credibility of historical narratives and the works accomplished in this regard centuries ago.

One of the heritage books that has faced significant criticism since its compilation is the book titled *"Al-Jami' Al-Musnad Al-Sahih Al-Mukhtasar Min Umuri Rasool Allah wa Sunanihi wa Ayyamihi,"* famously known as *"Sahih al-Bukhari"*. Numerous studies, research, and investigations have critiqued this book, highlighting the narrations and accounts it contains, particularly those contradicting reason, science, and the Quran. They have also examined fabricated narrations and those derived from Israeli traditions (*Isra'iliyyat*), among other aspects. These critiques have made *"Sahih al-Bukhari"* one of the most controversial books in Islamic history.

Despite the fierce criticisms aimed at *Sahih al-Bukhari* regarding the contents of its narrations, the credibility of some of its narrators, and even criticisms directed at its author, Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, a majority of scholars, jurists, and hadith narrators have continued to uphold the book. They insist that everything in it is authentic, claiming it is the most authentic book after the Quran. They have even gone so far as to accuse anyone who questions or critiques its

narrations of blasphemy, heresy, or apostasy. This stance persists even when some narrations blatantly contradict the Quran itself, leading to the unfortunate situation where the book is regarded as being above critique, science, reason, and even the Quran by many scholars.

Like other researchers, I initially set out to examine the narrations in *Sahih al-Bukhari*. I found that hundreds of them contained serious issues, with some degrading the divine essence, others disrespecting the status of prophethood, and others yet disparaging human dignity, particularly that of women. This led me to a critical question about the authenticity of the book titled *"Al-Jami' Al-Musnad Al-Sahih Al-Mukhtasar Min Umuri Rasool Allah."*

"Peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his Sunnah, and his days"—famously known as *Sahih al-Bukhari*—raises the question: Who actually authored *Sahih al-Bukhari*?!

This pivotal question might initially seem absurd and surprising because the author of *Sahih al-Bukhari* is well-known: Sheikh Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari. However, after reading this study that I present to you, dear reader, the legitimacy of this question will become clear. It aims to dismantle the myth of *Sahih al-Bukhari* from its pedestal, which was built on the veneration of men, elevating them to a status higher than that of the Prophets.

I have dedicated two full chapters of this book to discussing what I refer to as the calamity of hadith compilation and the calamity of the so-called "science of hadith." This provides a foundation for discussing the relationship between Sheikh al-Bukhari and the book attributed to him, *"Sahih al-Bukhari."* Additionally, I have devoted another chapter to exposing the myths woven around *"Al-Jami' Al-Sahih"* by al-Bukhari and Sheikh Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari himself. We have examined and debunked these myths, showing their triviality and fragility, before proceeding with the rest of the chapters in this book.

We analyze and critique the manuscripts of *Sahih al-Bukhari* currently available to us, alongside the evaluations made by hadith scholars and experts in *Jarh wa Ta'dil* (criticism and authentication). Special attention is given to these manuscripts and their origins, uncovering shocking truths that have been deliberately concealed or obscured by some scholars. Ultimately, we conclude that the current version of this book has an unknown author and has no actual connection to Sheikh al-Bukhari. I invite you, dear reader, to delve into the chapters of this book and request your patience until you finish its contents. Only then, based on the presented evidence and through the application of sound reason and logic, may you form your judgment. And Allah is the source of guidance.

Written in Marrakesh on the morning of Saturday, September 24, 2016.

Rachid Ibn Hamid Aylal

The Book of Reason

"These are the verses of Allah which We recite to you in truth. And indeed, you, [O Muhammad], are from among the messengers." [Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:252] **– True are the words of Allah Almighty.**

Many followers and readers of *Dar Al-Watan* for journalism, printing, and publishing eagerly anticipate its new intellectual creations. As always, they expect works that shine the light of truth upon the darkness of falsehood, dispelling myths and fabrications with courageous pens that fear no blame in the pursuit of truth. These works stir the stagnant pools of thought and shake dusty minds with the weapon of knowledge, irrefutable evidence, and strong logical arguments derived from the Book of Allah, which:

"Falsehood cannot approach it from before it or from behind it; [it is] a revelation from a [Lord who is] Wise and Praiseworthy." [Surah Fussilat, 41:42]

"Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an, and indeed, We will be its guardian." [Surah Al-Hijr, 15:9]

Today, after the groundbreaking book *"The Theory of Livestock Ears: A Scientific Qur'anic Study of Darwin's Research on Creation and Evolution,"* the acclaimed work *"My Mother: Full of Reason and Faith"* by the late Dr. Imad Hassan, the seasonal release *"And Warn Your Closest Relatives"* by researcher Professor Mamdouh Koushbay, and *"God's Thieves: Political Islam in Morocco—Reflections on Identity, Rhetoric, and Performance"* by researcher Idris Hani, *Dar Al-Watan* proudly presents to its esteemed readers a cry of truth from the peaks of the Atlas Mountains.

This book declares the stance of a new generation of thinkers and researchers who have resolved to defend Islam, the religion of Allah—the religion of peace, love, and brotherhood. It aims to vindicate the noble Prophet, Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), from the lies of fabricators and the deceptions of the advocates of dark jurisprudence. These individuals distort words from their proper contexts and trade Allah's verses for a paltry price.

This new work, *The Book of Reason: Sahih al-Bukhari—The End of a Legend* by researcher Rachid Aylal, presents evidence and documents that leave no room for doubt that Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari had little to no connection with most, if not all, of what has been attributed to him in the so-called *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

Many myths and fabricated stories have been woven around this "Sahih," which is far from being truly "authentic." Notably, there is no consensus, even among Salafis themselves, regarding the authenticity of this book (*Sahih*). While the author does not bring anything entirely new, he has exerted tremendous effort in research and exploration over several years, compiling sources from

Salafi scholars that no one before him has managed to gather. The result is this comprehensive book critiquing *Al-Jami' Al-Musnad Al-Sahih Al-Mukhtasar Min Umuri Rasul Allah Wa Sunanihi Wa Ayyamihi*, widely known as *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

Many scholars of the Muslim ummah consider it "the most authentic book after the Book of Allah." However, the author systematically refutes this claim with definitive evidence and arguments, demonstrating no consensus on the authenticity of everything recorded in this *Sahih*.

We are in dire need of such studies, which remove the dust clouding the minds of the Islamic ummah's members over the centuries. Much of what has reached us through writings and compilations—often with unknown sources or questionable authorship—can only be described as illegitimate. The time has come to reevaluate their content, especially what has been attributed in these pages to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

There are narrations and statements attributed to the Prophet of mercy and guidance that are simply impossible for him to have said. As for the figure of Imam al-Bukhari—assuming such a person with this name even existed—he has been surrounded by an aura of reverence and sanctity to such an extent that questioning or even approaching his work critically is often forbidden.

Some readers will likely rush to engage in their favorite pastime of insults, curses, and slander, but we ask them to exercise patience until they have completed reading this work. Then, they may judge it as they see fit, whether with praise or disdain.

I call upon researchers and scholars delving into the depths of heritage books to compare the Zoroastrian religion—which originated in Persia before the advent of Islam—with some of what is found in the book *Sahih al-Bukhari*, particularly regarding the issue of "Mi'raj" (the Prophet's ascension). This comparison will reveal the influence of Persian religions and ancient traditions on this book, as well as its saturation with some practices known among the people of Persia, particularly Iran, which later adopted Safavid Shiism.

There is no doubt that *Sahih al-Bukhari* and its attributed author are part of a deliberate distortion of Islam and the religious heritage of Muslims. Among the elements of this distortion—which has misled many ordinary Muslims, especially Shia—are strange practices alien to Islam in general and the school of Ahl al-Bayt (the Prophet's family) in particular. These include practices such as self-flagellation during Ashura, causing severe bodily harm by striking swords on heads and chest-beating, or the obligatory use of the "Husayni clay tablet" during prostration. These practices stem from myths and legends for which Allah has revealed no authority and is not part of the school of Ahl al-Bayt.

This is a sincere yet confrontational call to purify Sunni and Shia heritage books alike from myths and absurdities and return to the pure Islamic source: the Quran. When they failed to alter

the Quran, they fabricated what they called "hadiths" and attributed them falsely to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family).

Let us reflect on these verses from the Quran:

"And there is no creature on earth or bird that flies with its wings except [that they are] communities like you. We have not neglected in the Register a thing. Then unto their Lord they will be gathered." [Surah Al-An'am, 6:38]

"Then do they not reflect upon the Quran, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?" [Surah Muhammad, 47:24]

"Indeed, this Qur'an guides to that which is most just and right and gives good tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that they will have a great reward." [Surah Al-Isra, 17:9]

"Indeed, those who disbelieve in the message after it has come to them – and indeed, it is a mighty Book; Falsehood cannot approach it from before it or from behind it; [it is] a revelation from a [Lord who is] Wise and Praiseworthy." [Surah Fussilat, 41:41–42]

"This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as your religion. But whoever is forced by severe hunger with no inclination to sin – then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." [Surah Al-Ma’idah, 5:3]

"These are the verses of Allah, which We recite to you in truth. Then in what statement after Allah and His verses will they believe? Woe to every sinful liar Who hears the verses of Allah recited to him, then persists arrogantly as if he had not heard them. So give him tidings of a painful punishment." [Surah Al-Jathiyah, 45:6–8]

Abd Al-Nabi Al-Sharat
Director of Dar Al-Watan
Rabat, Friday, March 10, 2017

Chapter 1: The Calamity of Hadith Compilation

1. The Prophet's Prohibition of the Companions from Writing Down His Words
2. Hadith Scholars Contradicting the Hadith
3. An Excuse Worse Than a Fault
4. The Sunnah Overriding the Quran
5. The Sunnah Abrogating the Quran
6. The War of Narrations

The Prophet's Prohibition of His Companions from Writing Down His Words

It is not possible to discuss the book *Sahih al-Bukhari* before examining the general circumstances surrounding the compilation of hadith in this chapter. We must also address what later came to be known as the "science" of hadith. Many people mistakenly believe that hadith was a form of revelation equivalent to the Quran during its revelation and that the Prophet instructed it to be written alongside the Quran. However, this is not the case.

Numerous hadith narrators themselves reported that the Messenger of Allah forbade his companions from writing down his words. Here, we will briefly present some hadiths, considered authentic by hadith scholars, that explicitly prohibited the recording of hadith. We will also cite statements from his companions and the rightly guided caliphs who adhered to this prohibition.

Imam Ahmad, Muslim, Al-Tirmidhi, Al-Nasa'i, Al-Darimi, and others, including "Sheikh al-Bukhari," narrated a hadith from Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri in which the Prophet said:

"Do not write anything from me except the Quran, and whoever has written anything other than the Quran, let him erase it."

Muslim narrated in his *Sahih* from Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri, who said:

"We made great efforts to get the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to allow us to write, but he refused." (*Sahih Muslim*, Book of Zuhd and Softening of Hearts, Chapter: Caution Regarding Hadith Recording, 4/2298).

Al-Darimi narrated from Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri that when the companions sought the Prophet's permission to write, he did not grant it.

The rightly guided caliphs continued on the same path of not allowing the recording of hadith. It was narrated in Al-Dhahabi's *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz*, from the *Mursal* report of Ibn Abi Mulaykah, that Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq gathered the people after the Prophet's death and said:

"You are narrating many differing hadiths from the Messenger of Allah. Those who come after you will differ even more. So do not narrate anything from the Messenger of Allah. If anyone asks, say: 'The Book of Allah is sufficient for us.'"

"Between us and you is the Book of Allah." (*Tadhkirat al-Huffaz*, 1:23, *Hujjiyyat al-Sunnah*, p. 394).

In another narration from Malik ibn Anas, it is reported that Umar said when he refrained from writing down the Sunnah:

"There is no book alongside the Book of Allah."

Al-Hafiz Ibn Abdul Barr narrated with three chains in *Jami' Bayan al-'Ilm*, and Al-Hafiz Al-Dhahabi in *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz*, from Qarza ibn Ka'b, who said:

"When Umar sent us to Iraq, he walked with us to Sirar and said: 'Do you know why I have escorted you?' We said: 'You wanted to honor us.' He said: 'Along with that, there is another reason: you are going to a village where the people hum like bees when reciting the Quran. So do not distract them with narrations from the Messenger of Allah, and I am your partner in this matter.' Qarza said: 'After that, I never narrated anything from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him).'"

In *Tabaqat Ibn Sa'd*, it is mentioned:

"Hadiths had increased in Umar ibn al-Khattab's time, so he ordered people to bring them to him. When they did, he commanded that they be burned." (Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra by Ibn Sa'd, Hadith No. 5987).

Al-Hafiz Ibn Abdul Barr and Al-Bayhaqi narrated in *Al-Madkhal* that Urwah reported:

"Umar intended to write down the Sunnah and consulted the Prophet's companions. According to Al-Bayhaqi, they advised him to do so. Umar then began seeking Allah's guidance for a month, and one day, after he had firmly decided, he said: 'I had intended to write down the Sunnah, but I remembered a people who came before you who wrote books and became so engrossed in them that they abandoned the Book of Allah. By Allah, I will never mix the Book of Allah with anything else.'"

In another narration from Al-Bayhaqi:

"I will never blend the Book of Allah with anything else." (Al-Madkhal ila al-Sunan al-Kubra by Al-Bayhaqi, Hadith No. 590).

Indeed, from this point, the calamity of hadith began, and Umar's foresight was proven correct. Since the beginning of hadith compilation, up to this day, scholars and jurists have immersed themselves in hadith while abandoning the Book of Allah in favor of narrations, the majority of which are speculative in their authenticity.

In *Tarikh Ibn Asakir*, it is reported from Uthman ibn Affan that he said:

"It is not permissible for anyone to narrate a hadith that was not heard during the time of Abu Bakr or Umar." (Tarikh Dimashq by Ibn Asakir).

*Hadith No. 40116***,** consistent with the approach of the two caliphs before him in not documenting the words of the Prophet.

These and other narrations and accounts provide definitive evidence that the Prophet forbade his companions from writing down his words. The prohibition was even emphasized with great severity, as demonstrated by the texts cited earlier. However, as with all historical narrations subject to human interests, personal agendas, and objectives, other hadiths were fabricated or crafted that permitted the documentation of the Prophet's words.

Despite the apparent contradiction and conflict between the hadiths that strictly forbade writing the Prophet's words and those that allowed it, many hadith scholars have tried to justify this inconsistency. At times, they weakened some of the prohibitive narrations, while at other times they resorted to the concept of *abrogation*. Nonetheless, the hadiths prohibiting the documentation and writing remain stronger and more prominent. This explains why the rightly guided caliphs and a significant number of companions refrained from documenting the hadith.

At this point, I find it fitting to share what the Egyptian thinker Mahmoud Abu Rayya (may Allah have mercy on him) wrote in his book *"Lights on the Prophetic Sunnah"*, quoting the jurist and hadith scholar Rashid Rida (may Allah have mercy on him), author of *Al-Manar*, in his comparison between the narrations that prohibited writing down hadith and those that permitted it. Rashid Rida said:

"The most authentic narration prohibiting the writing of hadith is what Ahmad reported in his *Musnad*, Muslim in his *Sahih*[1], Ibn Abdul Barr in his book *Al-'Ilm*, and others, on the authority of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri, where the Prophet said: *'Do not write anything from me except the Quran, and whoever has written anything other than the Quran, let him erase it.'*

The most authentic narration allowing writing is the hadith of Abu Huraira in the two *Sahihs* and others, where the Prophet said: 'Write it down for Abu Shah.' This does not contradict the hadith of Abu Sa'id or those similar to it, based on our principle that the prohibition of writing the Prophet's hadith was intended to prevent it from being adopted as a general scripture alongside the Quran. This is because what the Prophet commanded to be written for Abu Shah was a sermon he had delivered."

The sermon delivered by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) on the day of the conquest of Mecca, concerning the sanctity of Mecca and its prohibited areas, was a

[1] **Sahih** (Arabic: صحيح) is an Arabic term that means "authentic" or "sound." In the context of Islamic hadith literature, it refers to the classification of a hadith (saying or action of Prophet Muhammad) as being genuine and reliable. A **Sahih** hadith is one that has been transmitted through a trustworthy and unbroken chain of narrators, and its content does not contradict established Islamic principles.

clarification of the Quran. He emphasized it on the day of the conquest, reiterated it during the Farewell Pilgrimage, and commanded its dissemination. This specific case was an exception to the general prohibition of writing his words. Al-Bukhari explicitly mentioned in the *Book of Lost Property* in his *Sahih* that Abu Shah, a Yemeni, requested that this sermon be written for him. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) ordered that his request be fulfilled.

According to the analysis of jurist and hadith scholar Rashid Rida, the prohibition primarily targeted the recording of the Prophet's words as part of the religion. Revelation is limited to the Quran, and no book has been revealed to humanity as divine scripture except the scriptures sent to Allah's prophets, including the Quran. Moreover, the Prophet's speech during the conquest of Mecca was political in nature, reflecting the role of a state leader rather than a messenger. The message in his sermon pertained to its explanatory context.

Thus, the compilation of hadith became a calamity that led Muslims away from the Book of Allah. Legislation began to be derived primarily from hadith instead of the Quran. People became preoccupied with hadith, collecting it, and extracting rulings from it, while the Quran was reduced to a secondary role, merely used to support hadith narrations. As a result, human narrations became the primary source of legislation and were regarded as the religion, despite the Prophet's explicit prohibition against documenting these narrations.

Allah promised to preserve only His revealed Book to His servant and Prophet, making it easier for those with corrupt intentions to falsify and distort the religion under the pretext of *Sunnah* or *hadith*. This raises an important question: How can hadith scholars contradict the very hadith texts before them?

Hadith Supporters Contradicting the Hadith

I am filled with astonishment, mixed with bewilderment, at the mindset of the narrators, compilers, and authenticators of hadith, who are often referred to as “muhaddithun.” How can they justify to themselves the recording of these hadiths, defend them, evaluate their narrators, study their chains of transmission, establish principles for the terminology of hadith, and excommunicate or label as heretics those who reject them? In the best of cases, they accuse dissenters of immorality.

Yet, these very individuals shamelessly present hadiths and reports to people that prohibit the writing and documentation of the Prophet’s words. This creates a bizarre form of “schizophrenia” that severely undermines their credibility in the eyes of rational, enlightened thinkers.

But the issue is not this simple. These hadith scholars, along with jurists deriving legal rulings from these hadiths, attempt to justify their stance with flimsy arguments. We will address these excuses and justifications shortly, exposing how they mock human intellect, which naturally rejects contradictions.

What is even more alarming is that these scholars have never paused, even for a moment in self-reflection, to ask themselves: Why was the documentation of the Sunnah delayed for nearly a hundred years after the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him)? This, despite its supposed legislative value, not merely as an explanation or elaboration of the Quran but as something they claim abrogates and overrides the Book of Allah in cases of conflict. In their discourse, it is the second source of legislation after the Quran, but in practical application, it becomes the primary source, with the Book of Allah subservient to it!

These scholars did not stop at narrating and documenting hadiths prohibiting the writing of hadith. They also narrated hadiths extolling the Quran, emphasizing its central role in the religion. Here, we will present a collection of such hadiths narrated by the muhaddithun themselves in this context.

Ibn Majah (Hadith No. 215) and Ahmad (Hadith No. 11870) narrated from Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him), who said:

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: *"Indeed, Allah has His chosen people among mankind."* They asked, *"O Messenger of Allah, who are they?"*

They asked: *"Who are they?"* The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) replied: *"They are the people of the Quran, the people of Allah and His special ones."* (Sahih Ibn Majah, authenticated by Al-Albani).

Abu Umamah Al-Bahili narrated:

"I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) say: 'Recite the Quran, for it will come on the Day of Resurrection as an intercessor for its companions.'" (Sahih Muslim: 1343).

Abdullah ibn Amr reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"It will be said to the companion of the Quran: 'Recite, ascend, and recite as you used to in the world, for your position will be at the last verse you recite.'" (Sahih Al-Jami': 8122).

Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated: *"The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) used to gather two men from among the martyrs of Uhud in one cloth, then he would say: 'Which of them had more Quran?' If one of them was pointed out, he would place him first in the grave."* (Sahih Bukhari: 1283).

Abu Huraira reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Whenever a group of people gathers in one of the houses of Allah, reciting the Book of Allah and studying it together, tranquility descends upon them, mercy envelops them, angels surround them, and Allah mentions them to those in His presence." (Sahih Muslim: 2699).

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Whoever recites a letter from the Book of Allah will earn a good deed, and the reward of a good deed is multiplied tenfold. I am not saying that 'Alif Lam Meem' is a single letter, but Alif is a letter, Lam is a letter, and Meem is a letter." (Sahih Al-Jami': 6469).

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Part of showing reverence to Allah is honoring a gray-haired Muslim, a carrier of the Quran who neither exaggerates nor neglects it, and a just ruler." (Hasan, Sahih Al-Jami': 2199).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"The companion of the Quran will come on the Day of Judgment and say: 'O Lord, adorn me,' and he will be adorned with the crown of honor. Then he will say: 'O Lord, increase me,' and he will be clothed with the robe of honor. Then he will say: 'O Lord, be pleased with me,' and it will be said: 'Recite and ascend.' With every verse, he will be given a good deed." (Hasan, Sahih Al-Jami': 8030).

Umar said:

"Indeed, your Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: 'Allah raises some people by this Book and lowers others by it.'" (Sahih Muslim: 817).

"Raises by this Book": By reading and acting upon it.
"Lowers by it": By neglecting it and failing to act according to its directives.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"The best among you are those who learn the Quran and teach it." (Sahih Bukhari: 4739).

Talhah ibn Musarrif said:

"I asked Abdullah ibn Abi Awfa: Did the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) make a will? He said: 'No.' I said: 'How were people then ordered to make wills?' He replied: 'He willed with the Book of Allah.'" (Sahih Bukhari: 2548).

Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani said in *Fath al-Bari*:

"Regarding the phrase 'How were people ordered to make wills,' it means: How could Muslims be commanded to do something that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) himself did not do?"

Ibn Abbas narrated:

"The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) entered a grave at night. A lamp was lit for him, and he took it from the direction of the qiblah, saying: 'May Allah have mercy on you. You were a person who frequently sought forgiveness and recited the Quran.' Then he said takbir over him four times." (Al-Tirmidhi: Hasan).

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"The example of a believer who recites the Quran is like that of a citron: its fragrance is pleasant, and its taste is good. The example of a believer who does not recite the Quran is like a date: it has no fragrance, but its taste is sweet. The example of a hypocrite who recites the Quran is like basil: its fragrance is pleasant, but its taste is bitter. The example of a hypocrite who does not recite the Quran is like the colocynth: it has no fragrance, and its taste is bitter." (Reported by Bukhari and Muslim).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"The example of one who recites the Quran and has memorized it is like that of a noble scribe. The example of one who recites it while finding it difficult is that of someone who has two rewards." (Reported by Bukhari and Muslim).

Abu Huraira narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Allah does not listen to anything as He listens to a Prophet reciting the Quran in a melodious tone." (Reported by Bukhari and Muslim).

On the authority of ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Amir al-Juhani, who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) came out to us while we were in the *Suffah* and said:

"Which one of you would love to go out every morning to Bathan or Al-‘Aqiq (two places near Madinah) and bring back two large, beautiful she-camels without committing any sin or severing family ties?"

We said, "All of us, O Messenger of Allah." He said, "Then, if one of you were to go to the mosque and learn two verses from the Book of Allah, it would be better for him than two she-camels, and if he were to learn three, it would be better than three, and so on, corresponding to their number in camels." (*Sahih Muslim: 803*)

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"When the son of Adam recites a verse of prostration and then prostrates, Satan withdraws, weeping, and says, ‘Woe to me!’ (In another narration: ‘Woe to me!’) He was commanded to prostrate, and he did so, and thus he will have Paradise. I was commanded to prostrate, but I refused, and thus I will have the Fire." (Sahih Muslim: 81)

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) once came upon a gathering of his companions and asked:

"What has brought you together?" *They replied, "We are sitting here to remember Allah, to praise Him for guiding us to Islam, and to thank Him for the blessings He has bestowed upon us." He said: "Jibril (Gabriel), peace be upon him, came to me and informed me that Allah, Most High, is boasting about you to the angels."* (*Sahih Muslim: 2701*)

Reflection:
It is strange that the narrators of these hadiths are often the same people who fail to give due weight to the Book of Allah, elevating hadiths above the words of Allah, which are flawless and free from falsehood, whether in their origin or outcome.

There are hadiths that have been subject to significant disagreement, infiltrated by myths and fabrications, for which our nation is still paying a heavy price today. An example of this is the emergence of "ISIS," a group born from such false narrations attributed to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). The Qur’an has been overshadowed by these narrations as if the Book of Allah is insufficient. Allah Most High says in His definitive Book:

"Is it not sufficient for them that We have sent down to you the Book, which is recited to them? Verily, in that is a mercy and a reminder for a people who believe." [Surah Al-Ankabut, Ayah 51]

An Excuse Worse Than the Mistake

I attempted to investigate the reasons why these individuals recorded the hadiths, contrary to the command of the Noble Messenger (peace be upon him), and elevated them to the highest, most esteemed status—above everything, even above the words of Allah. What I found were feeble excuses, the least that could be said about them is that they are an "excuse worse than the mistake," as will become clear during our discussion of their justifications.

The First Excuse

The first excuse offered by the scholars to counter the hadiths prohibiting the recording of hadiths is their claim that these prohibitive hadiths were abrogated by other hadiths permitting their recording. This is a strange interpretation by these scholars, as they attempt to explain and find solutions for every predicament they encounter by isolating it from the broader context of the evidence on the subject. If there truly was abrogation in this matter, then logically, the prohibitive hadiths should have been abrogated by those permitting writing. Yet, the Rightly Guided Caliphs followed the practice of prohibiting the writing of hadiths. This indicates that the majority of the Companions and the Caliphs were not aware of any abrogation of the prohibition of recording hadiths in favor of permission before the Prophet’s death. Otherwise, they would have collected and recorded the Prophet’s hadiths in books and volumes, just as they did with the compilation of the Qur'an. Instead, they adhered to the prohibition of recording hadiths.

In fact, Umar ibn Al-Khattab went as far as burning written copies of hadiths after gathering them. How, then, can the hadith prohibiting recording be considered abrogated by the permission to record despite the consistent practice of the Caliphs in prohibiting it?

A Response to Another Claim

If one of their scholars claims that some of the Companions indeed wrote down the sayings of the Messenger of Allah, we would say: Prove this with even a single record written by one of the Companions. If the Companions truly considered the words of the Messenger of Allah to be religious obligations, they would have documented them. If they indeed wrote down the Prophet's hadiths, then show us what they wrote and recorded.

A Very Strange and Dangerous Excuse

Among the strange and very dangerous excuses used by these individuals to explain the prohibition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from recording his sayings is their claim: "The prohibition came during the early period of the revelation."

To Avoid Mixing the Words of the Messenger with the Words of Allah
Some claim that the prohibition of writing down the sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) came "to prevent people from confusing the words of the Messenger with the words of Allah, so they would not be able to distinguish between them." This is a very dangerous statement that implicitly denies the miraculous eloquence of the words of Allah. It implies that the Arabs of that time—renowned masters of language and its nuances—might not be able to distinguish between the divine, miraculous words of Allah, which challenge all of humanity, and human speech.

This is despite the fact that the Arabs were astounded by the Qur'an's eloquence and clarity, to the point that they described the Messenger of Allah as a sorcerer. One of the most eloquent Arab poets of the pre-Islamic era famously said (as narrated by Ibn Hisham in his *Seerah*): "By Allah, his speech has sweetness; its root is firm, and its branches are fruitful. (In some narrations: 'its branches are lush.') And you cannot say anything about it except that it is false."

These scholars, who search for any kind of justification to legitimize the complete documentation of hadith, fall into a serious and dangerous error. In doing so, they effectively equate the Book of Allah with human speech, which is a blatant offense against the words of Allah. Although we do not doubt their sincere intentions, we consider their flimsy justifications to be an excuse worse than the mistake.

Another Excuse
Another excuse they present is: "The prohibition was specific to writing down hadith in the same scroll as the Qur'an." This excuse is both strange and astonishing. It raises the immediate question: Where did this claim originate? Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, Umar ibn al-Khattab, and other Companions provided clear reasons for the prohibition of writing hadith. These reasons included avoiding the creation of another book alongside the Book of Allah or preventing people from becoming distracted from the Qur'an by the words of the Messenger.

It is well known that the character of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was described by our mother, Aisha, as "embodying the Qur'an." All his traits and morals were a practical application of the Qur'an. This means that anyone familiar with the Qur'an could discern the noble qualities of the Prophet through the words of Allah.

The Sunnah Overrides the Qur'an

Anyone reading this title might initially be shocked, as logic dictates: if the Qur'an is unanimously agreed to be the primary source of Islamic legislation, being the words of Allah that no falsehood can approach from before or behind, how can anyone claim that the Sunnah "judges" the Qur'an?

Al-Darimi narrated in his *Sunan* from Yahya ibn Abi Kathir that he said: **"The Sunnah judges the Qur'an, and the Qur'an does not judge the Sunnah."**

Al-Zarkashi mentioned in his book *Al-Bahr Al-Muhit*:

"In the context of the need for the Qur'an for the Sunnah, Al-Awza'i said: 'The Qur'an is more in need of the Sunnah than the Sunnah is of the Qur'an.' Abu Umar commented: 'This means that the Sunnah explains and clarifies what is meant by the Qur'an.' Yahya ibn Abi Kathir said: 'The Sunnah judges the Qur'an.'"

From these statements, it becomes evident that these scholars regarded the narrations attributed to the Prophet—most of which are speculative in authenticity—as judges and rulers over the Qur'an, which is definitive in its authenticity. This claim is deeply troubling and defies reason. How can someone assert such a position so boldly and without hesitation? It would be reasonable to question their intellect if not their faith.

In Ibn Abd al-Barr's *Jami' Bayan al-'Ilm wa Fadlih*, it is narrated that when Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal was asked about the claim that "the Sunnah judges the Qur'an," he said:

"I dare not say such a thing. Instead, I say that the Sunnah explains and clarifies the Qur'an."

Even in our time, there are those who elevate hadith to a rank higher than the Qur'an, even while parroting the claim that the Qur'an is the primary source of legislation. In practice, however, they contradict this by considering the Sunnah to "judge" the Qur'an. This means that if there is a hadith that contradicts the Qur'an in its general or specific meaning, the hadith is treated as having authority over the Qur'an.

This explains why many scholars blindly adhere to what is found in hadiths, disregarding all the verses of the Qur'an and throwing them to the wayside.

Clear Rulings in the Qur'an and Contradictions in Hadith
Among the many examples of this contradiction is the following hadith:
On the authority of Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"I have been commanded to fight people until they testify that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, establish prayer, and give zakat. If they do that, they have protected their blood and wealth from me, except by the rights of Islam, and their reckoning is with Allah." (Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim)

This hadith fundamentally and in detail contradicts the verses of the Qur'an, such as:

- **"There is no compulsion in religion. Truth has been made clear from falsehood. So, whoever disbelieves in Taghut (false gods) and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."** [Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayah 256]

- **"And say, 'The truth is from your Lord. So, whoever wills—let him believe; and whoever wills—let him disbelieve.' Verily, We have prepared for the wrongdoers a fire whose walls will surround them. And if they call for relief, they will be relieved with water like molten metal, which will scald their faces. Terrible is the drink, and evil is the resting place."** [Surah Al-Kahf, Ayah 29]

- **"And if your Lord had willed, all those on earth would have believed—all of them entirely. Then, would you compel the people in order that they become believers?"** [Surah Yunus, Ayah 99]

However, these individuals disregard such verses and brazenly claim, with audacity against Allah, that "the Sunnah judges the Qur'an." They insist that the ruling of the hadith takes precedence, as exemplified by the idea of fighting people until they testify to the oneness of Allah and the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him).

As for me, I say with full conviction that these are words the Messenger of Allah—whose character was the Qur'an—would never have uttered. Allah described him in the Qur'an as:

"And We have not sent you except as a mercy to the worlds." [Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayah 107]

On the authority of Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), she said:

"Among what was revealed in the Qur'an was: 'Ten known breastfeedings make marriage prohibited.' Then this was abrogated by 'Five known breastfeedings.' The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) passed away while these verses were still recited in the Qur'an." (Sahih Muslim: Book of Nursing, Chapter on Prohibition through Five Breastfeedings)

This hadith, attributed to our mother Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), accuses the Qur'an of distortion and falsification, despite Allah's clear statement in His definitive Book:

"Indeed, it is We who sent down the Reminder, and indeed, We will be its guardian." [Surah Al-Hijr, Ayah 9].

According to the text of this hadith, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) supposedly passed away, while the verse regarding the prohibition through five breastfeedings was still recited as part of the Qur'an. However, any serious researcher can verify that no such verse exists in the Qur'an today with this meaning or implication.

Yet strange narrations like this, which undermine the credibility of the Qur'an, are often left unchallenged by those who should be addressing them. This is deeply regrettable. Moreover, one could cite dozens, even hundreds, of hadiths that contradict the Qur'an both broadly and in detail, and that also diminish the status of both divinity and prophethood. These narrations often draw from a wellspring of myth and superstition, clash with reason and science, and originate from hadith collections, including *Sahih Bukhari*.

For brevity, we have limited ourselves to these examples to give the reader a sense of what we mean.

The Sunnah Abrogating the Qur'an

After asserting that the Sunnah "judges" the Qur'an—meaning that it clarifies, interprets, and governs it—these individuals could not reconcile the clear contradictions between certain hadiths and the Qur'an except by declaring that the Sunnah abrogates the Qur'an. In doing so, they entrenched the idea of the absolute supremacy of narrations over the Book of Allah.

This effectively reduced the Qur'an's role in people's lives to being recited for expelling devils, curing illnesses, or warding off the evil eye and envy. They tied the Qur'an to superstition and turned it into a means of earning income while neglecting its true purpose: to serve as a guiding light for our lives, a source of guidance on the path, a salvation from misguidance, and a unifier against division.

In this context, Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, may Allah have mercy on him, titled a section in his book *Al-Kifayah fi 'Ilm al-Riwayah* (p. 23):

"On Equating the Ruling of the Book of Allah with the Ruling of the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), in Terms of the Obligation to Act Upon Them and the Requirement to Comply."

Under this section, he cited the hadith of Al-Miqdam ibn Ma'dikarib, in which the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Indeed, I have been given the Qur'an and something like it alongside it…" (Narrated by Al-Tirmidhi: 2664*)*. Al-Tirmidhi said: "This is a hasan (good) and ghareeb (strange) hadith from this chain." It was also deemed authentic by Al-Albani in *As-Silsilah As-Saheehah* (2870).

In his analysis and critique of this hadith, the Arab writer Mahmoud Abu Rayya, in his book *Adwa' 'ala as-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyyah* (*Lights on the Prophetic Sunnah*), provides reasoning that comforts the soul and appeals to the intellect. I quote his words, may Allah have mercy on him:

"Indeed, I have been given the Book and something like it alongside it." In another narration: *"Indeed, I have been given the Qur'an and something like it alongside it."*

This hadith is one of the strangest claims found in the body of narrations! If the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had truly been given "something like the Book" or "something like the Qur'an," it would mean that he was given it to complete and complement the Qur'an, to clarify his religion and legislation.

If that were the case, then why didn't the Prophet make a point of writing down this "like" during his lifetime, just as he did with the Qur'an? Why didn't he appoint scribes specifically for it, as he did for the Qur'an?

Why Didn't the Prophet Command the Recording of This "Like" Alongside the Qur'an?
If the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had truly been given "something like" the Qur'an, why didn't he command its documentation during his lifetime, just as he did with the Qur'an? Why didn't he appoint scribes for it, as he did for the Qur'an? Why did he explicitly prohibit writing anything other than the Qur'an, saying: **"Do not write anything from me other than the Qur'an,"** and not mention this "like" that he was supposedly given alongside it?

Here, one might rightly ask:

- Is it reasonable for the Prophet to leave what Allah revealed to him unrecorded, floating between people's memories—some preserving it, others forgetting it, and others distorting it—leaving it vulnerable, unlike the Qur'an, which was safeguarded in a written and protected form?

- Would the Messenger of Allah, by leaving such a revelation unrecorded, have truly fulfilled his duty of delivering the message completely and faithfully?

- Where was this hadith when the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said during his final illness after the verse was revealed:

  "This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have approved Islam as your religion." [Surah Al-Ma'idah, Ayah 3]

  He reportedly declared,

  "By Allah, you will not find anything to hold against me. I did not make lawful except what the Qur'an made lawful, and I did not make unlawful except what the Qur'an made unlawful."

- Where was this "like" when Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) addressed the people, saying:

  "Between us and you is the Book of Allah. Follow what it permits and avoid what it prohibits"?

- Why didn't Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) refer to this "*like*" when he consulted with Abu Bakr about collecting and compiling the Qur'an after the Battle of Yamama, a matter of great importance?

- Where was this "*like*" when Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) described the character of the Prophet? Surely, she should have said, *"His character was the Qur'an and its like,"* but instead, she simply stated:

"His character was the Qur'an."

- Why didn't the Companions show any concern for this "*like"?* Why didn't they document it as they did with the Qur'an during Abu Bakr's time or when it was compiled and distributed during Uthman's era?

By neglecting this supposed *"like" of the Qur'an, they would be effectively abandoning part of the "revelation."* This claim, if true, raises serious questions about the completeness and integrity of the prophetic message. "Volume 4, page 322, of *Seerat Ibn Hisham*."

Without Documentation, They Would Be Considered Sinners
This concludes the excerpt from *Adwa' 'ala as-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyyah* (*Lights on the Prophetic Sunnah*).

No matter how hard you try to resolve this disarray in their narrations, which they attribute to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), you will find neither balance nor logic, especially when you realize that the earlier scholars differed greatly on the issue of whether the Sunnah can abrogate the Qur'an. However, most of the later scholars adopted this difference as a pretext to sidestep the Book of Allah, placing the rulings of jurists—who should have a relative and contextual position—in an absolute and definitive one.

Here is an excerpt from Sheikh Muhammad Salih Al-Munajjid, the general supervisor of the *IslamQA* website, found at the link https://islamqa.info/ar/138742

He states:
"As for the issue of the Sunnah abrogating the Qur'an, scholars have differed into two views:

1. **The first opinion:** The Sunnah cannot abrogate the definitive texts of the Qur'an. This is the view of the majority of scholars of Usul al-Fiqh (principles of Islamic jurisprudence).

Even Imam Al-Shafi'i in *Al-Risala* (pp. 106-109) and Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on them both) held that even mutawatir[2] (mass-transmitted) Sunnah cannot abrogate the Qur'an. This view was also adopted by Ibn Qudamah and Ibn Taymiyyah. For further reading, refer to *Al-Bahr Al-Muhit* by Al-Zarkashi (vol. 5, pp. 262-272).

[2] **Mutawatir narration** refers to a type of hadith (Prophetic tradition) in Islamic scholarship that is transmitted through such a large number of independent chains of narrators that it is impossible for all of them to have agreed upon a lie or fabricated the report. This category is considered the most authentic and reliable in the hierarchy of hadith classification.

2. **The second opinion:** The Sunnah, even if it is ahad (a singularly reported narration), can abrogate the Qur'an. This view was adopted by some scholars of Usul al-Fiqh, particularly among the Hanafi school, as mentioned in *Jam' Al-Jawami'* by Al-Subki (p. 57), where he stated:

   'Abrogation can occur through the Qur'an to the Qur'an, the Sunnah to the Qur'an, or the Qur'an to the Sunnah. Some said it is impermissible with ahad narrations, but the truth is that abrogation only occurs with mutawatir narrations.'

This opinion was also chosen by the scholar Muhammad Al-Amin Al-Shinqiti, who said:

"What appears to us as the correct principle is that authentic ahad narrations can abrogate mutawatir (mass-transmitted) Qur'anic texts if their later timing is confirmed, and there is no real contradiction between them, as mutawatir is truthful, and so is the Sunnah.'"

Can the Qur'an Be Abrogated by Hadith?
If the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was given "something similar" to the Qur'an, why didn't he have it documented like the Qur'an? Why did he explicitly prohibit writing anything other than the Qur'an, stating: **"Do not write anything from me except the Qur'an"**, without mentioning this "similar" revelation?

On the Question of Abrogation

The discussion surrounding whether the Sunnah can abrogate the Qur'an has always been contentious. For example, consider the verse:

"Say, 'I do not find within that which was revealed to me anything forbidden to one who eats it unless it be a dead animal, spilled blood, or the flesh of swine—for indeed, it is impure—or what has been dedicated to other than Allah. But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit], then indeed, your Lord is Forgiving and Merciful.'" [Surah Al-An'am, Ayah 145].

This verse explicitly permits all other meats apart from the ones listed. However, in a *Sahih* hadith, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) later forbade the consumption of domesticated donkey meat during the Battle of Khaybar. According to those who argue that the Sunnah can abrogate the Qur'an, this prohibition does not contradict the Qur'an because the hadith establishes a new ruling that was not previously mentioned in the Qur'an.

They argue that the Qur'an does not preclude new prohibitions in the future, as is evident in the chronological difference between the revelation of the verse and the hadith. Therefore, they conclude that authentic ahadith can abrogate Qur'anic rulings if it is established that the hadith came after the Qur'anic verse and if there is no real contradiction.

In *Adwa' Al-Bayan* (Vol. 2, pp. 451-452), Sheikh Muhammad Al-Amin Al-Shinqiti concludes:

"It is permissible for authentic ahadith to abrogate the Qur'an if it is established that the hadith was revealed later. There is no contradiction because both the Qur'an and the Sunnah are truthful, but their timings differ."

A Stark Example of Prioritizing Hadith Over the Qur'an

This example reflects a disturbing trend among contemporary scholars who favor hadith over the Qur'an, enabling the dominance of narrations and reducing the Qur'an to a subordinate position. Even after acknowledging the significant differences among scholars regarding this issue, they express clear bias towards the opinion that supports abrogation by the Sunnah, presenting it as the "correct" view—despite the lack of concrete evidence to support it.

A Question Born of Frustration

I cannot help but ask, with a heavy heart and a troubled mind:

- If the Qur'an—revealed by the Eternal, Omniscient Allah—is subject to abrogation in favor of human-transmitted narrations, even if attributed authentically to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), what is the purpose of the Qur'an's revelation to us?
- What benefit remains in a scripture that cannot stand on its own and needs external support, even from something of lesser authority?

The Unparalleled Nature of the Qur'an

The Qur'an, as the divine speech of Allah, is beyond comparison with any other form of communication, no matter how authentic or revered. Allah's words are absolute and infinitely superior, far removed from what they (those who claim otherwise) allege.

The War of Narrations

After the Muslim Ummah fragmented into various sects—Sunni, Shia, Murji'ah, Kharijites, Qadariyyah, Jabariyyah, and other factions—each sect and school of thought sought to establish its legitimacy through narrations. These factions resorted to fabricating or misattributing narrations to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) to support their theological or political stances, especially when they couldn't find support for their views in the Qur'an.

This led to an explosion of fabricated and false narrations attributed to the Prophet, particularly during times of heightened tribalism, ideological extremism, and political conflicts. These fabrications fueled a dangerous "war of narrations" falsely linked to the Messenger of Allah. Adding to this chaos were influences from other religions like Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism. These groups exploited the proliferation of narrations—which numbered in the hundreds of thousands and were often contradictory—to overshadow the Qur'an and replace it with extensive collections of hadith.

For instance, Ibn Hajar Al-Haytami wrote a treatise titled *Mablagh Al-Arab fi Fakhri Al-Arab* (*The Pinnacle of Arab Glory*), in which he compiled narrations extolling the virtues of Arabs and warning against hostility toward them. Some of these narrations include the following:

1. **Narration 1:** Al-Hakim and Al-Bayhaqi narrated on the authority of Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

   "When Allah created creation, He chose the Arabs. Then He chose Quraysh from among the Arabs, then Banu Hashim from Quraysh, and then He chose me from Banu Hashim. I am the best among the best." Adh-Dhahabi was silent about this narration.

2. **Narration 2:** Al-Hakim, At-Tabarani in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir* and *Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat*, narrated on the authority of Ibn Umar that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

   "Allah created creation and chose the descendants of Adam. He chose the Arabs from the descendants of Adam, and He chose Mudar from the Arabs, Quraysh from Mudar, Banu Hashim from Quraysh, and then chose me from Banu Hashim. Thus, I am the best of the best."

Continuation of the Narrations: Favoritism for Arabs

1. **Narration on Loving Arabs**
   The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

   "Whoever loves the Arabs, it is because of my love that they love them. And whoever despises the Arabs, it is because of their hatred for me that they despise them."

   Al-Haythami said:

   "This narration includes Hammam ibn Waqid, who is weak but can be considered for corroboration. The rest of the narrators are trustworthy."

   Al-Haytami, in Mablagh Al-Arab, also mentioned:

   "The chain of this hadith is not problematic, although several narrators have been criticized."

2. **Gabriel's Division of Humanity**
   At-Tabarani narrated in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat* on the authority of Abu Huraira that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

   "When Allah created creation, He sent Gabriel, who divided people into two groups: Arabs and non-Arabs. The best of Allah's creation were in the Arabs. Then, He divided the Arabs into two groups: Yemen and Mudar. The best of Allah's creation were in Mudar. Then He divided Mudar into two groups: Quraysh and others. The best of Allah's creation was in Quraysh. Then He selected me from among the best of them." (Sahih Muslim Book 30, Hadith 5771)

   Al-Haytami commented in *Mablagh Al-Arab*:

   "Its chain of transmission is good."

3. **The Chosen Lineage**
   Muslim and others narrated from Wathilah ibn Al-Asqa' that he heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) say:

   "Allah chose Kinanah from the descendants of Ismail, Quraysh from Kinanah, Banu Hashim from Quraysh, and me from Banu Hashim."

4. **Saying to Salman Al-Farisi**
   At-Tirmidhi, Al-Hakim, and others narrated from Salman Al-Farisi that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"O Salman, do not hate me lest you abandon your religion."

Salman said:

"O Messenger of Allah, how could I hate you when Allah has guided us through you?"

The Prophet replied:

"By hating the Arabs, you would hate me."

At-Tirmidhi described this as a *"Hasan (good) and Ghareeb (strange) hadith."* Al-Hakim said:

"Its chain is authentic but not included by Bukhari and Muslim."

Adh-Dhahabi commented:

"The narrator Qaboos ibn Abi Dhibyan is questionable."

5. **Love for Quraysh and Arabs**
   Al-Hakim and At-Tabarani narrated from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

   "Loving Quraysh is faith, and hating them is disbelief. Loving the Arabs is faith, and hating them is disbelief. Whoever loves the Arabs has loved me, and whoever hates the Arabs has hated me."

Contradiction with the Qur'an
These narrations explicitly contradict the Qur'an in both form and substance. They clash with the universal message of Islam, as stated in Surah Al-Hujurat:

"O mankind, We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Verily, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware." [Surah Al-Hujurat, Ayah 13].

Narrated from Al-Hasan, from his father, from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from their fathers, that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said:

"Indeed, in Paradise, there is a spring sweeter than honey, softer than butter, cooler than snow,

and more fragrant than musk. From it, Allah created the clay from which we and our Shia (followers) were formed. Whoever is not from this clay is neither from us nor our Shia. This is the covenant that Allah, the Almighty, took concerning the allegiance to Ali ibn Abi Talib."

Al-Kanji also narrated through his chain from Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf that he said:

"Ask me before fabricated and false narrations mingle with the truth. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said: 'I am the tree, Fatima is its branch, Ali is its pollinator, Hasan and Husayn are its fruits, and our Shia are its leaves. The tree's root is in Paradise, and its root, branch, pollinator, and leaves are all in Paradise.' This was narrated by the historian of Damascus in his virtues through various chains."

These two narrations are merely simple examples of some of the myths found among our Shia brothers. Correspondingly, there are other narrations among the Sunni tradition that elevate adherence to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, glorifying the Companions and placing them beyond criticism or critique.

For example, in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, it is narrated from Al-Irbad ibn Sariya that he said:

"The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) led us in the morning prayer and then turned to us and gave a sermon that moved the hearts and made the eyes shed tears. We said, 'O Messenger of Allah, it is as if this is a farewell sermon, so advise us.' He said, 'I advise you to fear Allah, listen, and obey, even if a black Abyssinian slave is appointed as your leader. Whoever among you lives after me will see much discord, so adhere to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Hold onto it with your molar teeth. Beware of newly invented matters, for every innovation is a misguidance.'"

This hadith emphasizes that alongside the obligatory adherence to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah, there is also a Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs that must be followed and clung to firmly. Consequently, this elevates their status to near-prophetic levels, as implied by the phrase *"my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs..."* From this, blind obedience to rulers is also inferred, with an outright rejection of opposing or disobeying them for any reason.

The disparagement of Abyssinians and those with dark or black skin is evident in another hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, where the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Listen and obey, even if an Abyssinian slave is appointed over you, whose head looks like a raisin."

From Abdullah ibn Mughaffal al-Muzani (may Allah be pleased with him), he said:
The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Fear Allah regarding my Companions, fear Allah regarding my Companions. Do not make

them targets after me. Whoever loves them does so out of love for me, and whoever hates them does so out of hatred for me. Whoever harms them has harmed me, and whoever harms me has harmed Allah, the Blessed and Exalted. And whoever harms Allah is close to being seized by Him."

This narration was reported by Ahmad (5/54), al-Tirmidhi (3862), and al-Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab al-Iman* (2/191). Al-Tirmidhi commented:

"This hadith is strange; we only know it through this chain."

This trend could continue indefinitely. Every faction within the Islamic society at the time sought to secure a position that fulfilled its aspirations by fabricating narrations, hadiths, and reports. It did not stop there; each faction also sought narrations and reports to criticize, condemn, and even declare its opposing faction disbelievers, thereby consigning them to Hell and the worst of fates.

Chapter 2: The Plague of the Science of Hadith

1. The Hadith in the Qur'an
2. It’s Not a Science
3. The Myth of the “Science” of Narrators
4. Narrating Hadith by Meaning
5. The Crime of Hadith

The Hadith in the Qur'an

The "scholars" of hadith define the term *hadith* as:

"What is attributed to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in terms of words, actions, approvals, or descriptions of his physical or moral attributes."

In this sense, *hadith* specifically refers to what is directly traced back to the Prophet (peace be upon him), as agreed upon by many hadith scholars, who adhered to this definition in their books. However, some of these scholars also include in the definition of *hadith* the sayings and actions of the Companions and the Followers! This inclusion is evident in the works of the majority of hadith scholars, who compiled in their books a mixture of the Prophet's sayings, actions, approvals, and the sayings and actions of the Companions and Followers.

One has every right to be astonished at this and to pose the critical question that, without asking it, clarity cannot be achieved:

If the *hadith*—which originates from the mouth of the Messenger (peace be upon him), his actions, and his approvals—is considered part of the religion because he is deemed the best role model for us, what then is the relevance of the Companions and Followers in this context? Except for the implicit implication that their words and actions are also considered religious, to be followed and adopted as additional Sunnahs alongside the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah.

This essentially positions the Companions as additional "prophets" who shaped the religion in its current form. This includes all categories of the Companions, with their varying levels of knowledge and ignorance, sincerity and hypocrisy, righteousness and sinfulness, faith and disbelief, and so on.

This raises an urgent and pressing question: What is the root of this concept?

If we examine the linguistic meaning of the word *hadith* in sources like *Lisan al-Arab* by Ibn Manzur, it is defined as:

"What is new, in contrast to what is old. It also refers to speech, whether brief or extensive, as it is something that occurs and renews itself gradually. Its plural form is ahadith (narrations)."

If we turn to the Qur'anic usage of the word *hadith*, we find its linguistic meaning in verses such as:

"And We have already revealed to you in the Book that when you hear the verses of Allah being denied..." [Surah An-Nisa: Verse continues]

Surah An-Nisa 140:
"And it has already been revealed to you in the Book that when you hear the verses of Allah being denied and ridiculed, do not sit with them until they engage in a discourse other than that. Indeed, [if you do], you would then be like them. Indeed, Allah will gather the hypocrites and the disbelievers in Hell altogether."

Surah An-Nisa 42:
"On that Day, those who disbelieved and disobeyed the Messenger will wish that the earth were leveled over them. And they will not conceal any statement from Allah."

Surah Al-An'am 68:
"And when you see those who engage in [offensive] discourse concerning Our verses, turn away from them until they enter into a discourse other than that. And if Satan should cause you to forget, then do not remain after the reminder with the wrongdoing people."

Surah Al-Jathiya 6:
"These are the verses of Allah which We recite to you in truth. Then in what statement after Allah and His verses will they believe?"

Surah An-Nisa 87:
"Allah – there is no deity except Him. He will surely assemble you for the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt. And who is more truthful than Allah in statement?"

Surah Yusuf 111:
"There was certainly in their stories a lesson for those of understanding. Never was it [i.e., the Quran] a narration invented, but a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of all things and guidance and mercy for a people who believe."

Surah Al-Kahf 6:
"Then perhaps you would kill yourself through grief over them, [O Muhammad], if they do not believe in this message, out of sorrow."

Surah An-Najm 59-60:
"Then, at this statement, do you wonder? And you laugh and do not weep?"

Surah Al-Waqia 81-82:
"Then is it to this statement that you are indifferent and make [your] provision [of denial] that you disbelieve?"

Surah Az-Zumar 23:
"Allah has sent down the best statement: a consistent Book wherein is reiteration. The skins shiver therefrom of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts relax at the remembrance of Allah."

Surah Az-Zumar 23:
"Those who fear their Lord — their skins shiver from it [i.e., the Quran]; then their skins and their hearts soften to the remembrance of Allah. That is the guidance of Allah; He guides with it whom He wills. And whomever Allah leaves astray — for him there is no guide."

The text continues to highlight the clear indication in many Quranic verses that "Hadith" (discourse or narration) in the Quran refers to the words of Allah revealed to His prophets. It emphasizes that the Quran is the divinely inspired book revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). However, the scholars of Hadith and their followers have restricted the meaning of "Hadith" to the sayings, actions, and approvals of the Prophet, his companions, and the followers, as well as their conditions, news, days, and traditions. Thus, when the term "Hadith" is mentioned, it is instinctively understood to mean the Sunnah of the Prophet and the sayings, actions, and approvals of the companions and followers, including details about the Prophet's life before and after prophethood.

The text criticizes this narrowing of the term "Hadith" to the sayings of the Prophet while ignoring its usage in the Quran, where it refers to the divine speech of Allah. It argues that the Quran has described itself as "Hadith," yet these scholars have failed to respect the divine connotation of the term as given by Allah and have instead appropriated it for a specific meaning related to the Prophet's traditions.

The text calls for prioritizing the Quran as the primary religious source and deriving religious terminology from it. It laments that some scholars have sidelined the Quran in favor of historical narrations without divine sanctity, making them fall under Allah's reproach in the verse:

"And the Messenger will say, 'O my Lord, indeed my people have taken this Quran as [a thing] abandoned.'" [Surah Al-Furqan 30].[3]

"And [another form of abandonment is] to believe in it and listen to it attentively. The second is to abandon acting upon it, not adhering to its lawful and unlawful rulings, even if one reads it and believes in it. The third is to abandon using it for judgment and turn to it for adjudication in the fundamentals and branches of religion while believing that it does not provide certainty and that its evidence is merely verbal and does not yield definitive knowledge. The fourth is to abandon reflecting upon it, understanding it, and seeking to know what the Speaker [i.e., Allah] intended through it."

[3] The writer concludes by referencing Ibn al-Qayyim in his book *Al-Fawa'id*, who describes various types of abandoning the Quran, one of which is abandoning listening to it.

It’s Not a Science:

It is impossible for someone engaged in Hadith studies to relinquish the term "science" because they firmly believe that what they are working on qualifies as a science, similar to physics, chemistry, astronomy, medicine, agriculture, geology, and other recognized sciences.

In this context, Dr. Imad Hassan (may Allah have mercy on him) states in an article he published on his Facebook page titled *The Myth of the Science of Narrators*:

"In the modern era, where human knowledge has accumulated enough to classify the different sciences, the term 'science' is used for a specific field of human knowledge that meets defined criteria to be considered a 'science.' Among the most important of these criteria are the following:

Uniqueness of the subject in the relevant science: For example, chemistry is the science concerned with the interactions between atoms of various elements; biology is the science specializing in the nature of living creatures; astronomy focuses on celestial bodies; and geology concerns itself with the nature of the Earth. In this regard, biology cannot be called mathematics, which deals with numbers and calculations, as that would create confusion by substituting one established name for another. Similarly, geology cannot be called sociology because it has no connection to social studies, and doing so would constitute a misappropriation of a name with a previously agreed-upon meaning. Therefore, for a field of knowledge to be considered a science, it must have a name that distinguishes and defines it, reflecting its unique characteristics."

The term "Hadith" has multiple meanings, including its use in previous Quranic verses to refer to the speech of Allah. So, are those engaged in Hadith studies focused on the words of Allah, the words and actions of the Prophet, the actions and sayings of the companions and followers, or something else?

Moreover, there is a significant divergence in the principles of what these scholars like to call "science." It should also be noted that even the term "principles" seems far removed from merely accusing and criticizing others.

The Prophet had barely passed away when the civilizations of Persia, Rome, Egypt, and Yemen rapidly dissolved into Islam at a time when transmitting news between Kufa and Medina would take weeks. How can we believe that, in such circumstances and in that environment, the news of the Prophet was conveyed through a chain of narrators whose integrity and credibility were disputed by people, spanning several centuries until the era of documentation? This phenomenon was a fabrication inherited, sanctified, and used to intimidate people from criticizing it. However, it neither occurred nor does it occur today, and it cannot happen in human society.

Based on all of the above, under no circumstances can we consider the myth of "Hadith" as a science because it lacks any scientific basis. Its methodology is subjective, its approach is selective and arbitrary, and it relies on the opinions of men, which are then used to judge other men as either trustworthy or untrustworthy.

The Myth of the "Science" of Narrators:

It is impossible to discuss what is referred to as the "Science of Hadith" without delving into the concept of *Isnad* (the chain of narration), and it is equally impossible to discuss *Isnad* without examining what is called the "Science of Narrators" or "Biographies of Narrators," which is considered a branch of the "Science" of Hadith. I wanted to begin this discussion by quoting Dr. Ahmed Subhi Mansour from an article he published in 2005 on the website *Al-Hiwar Al-Mutamaddin* (Modern Discussion) titled *Isnad in Hadith*. Ahmed Subhi Mansour states:

"During the era of Caliph Al-Ma'mun, the poet Al-Atabi was walking in the streets of Baghdad and entered the market while eating. This act was against the etiquette or 'decency' upheld by the upper classes. A friend of Al-Atabi objected, saying: 'Are you eating in the market where people can see you?' Al-Atabi sarcastically replied: 'And are these people? They are cattle.' The friend protested angrily, to which Al-Atabi responded: 'I will show you whether they are people or cattle.

He then climbed a hill, called out to the people, and said, 'O people, come and listen to me as I speak about the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).' The crowd rushed toward him, gathering around as he began to narrate: 'So-and-so narrated from so-and-so, who narrated from so-and-so, that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said...' He continued transitioning from one narration to another, captivating the minds, hearts, and eyes of the listeners.

If he moved his hand to the right, their heads turned to the right, and if he nodded to the left, they turned their heads left. Finally, he said to them: 'And it has been narrated by more than one person (i.e., multiple narrators) that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "If the tongue of one of you reaches his nose, he will enter Paradise."' He then fell silent.

Immediately, every listener stuck out their tongue, trying to touch their nose. The scene of everyone doing this was utterly ridiculous. Al-Atabi turned to his friend, laughing, and said: 'Didn't I tell you they are cattle?'"

Attributing a Hadith to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) is fundamentally fraught with significant doubt. Therefore, as soon as someone narrates a Hadith and attributes it to the Prophet, you should immediately ask them directly about their source.

On the *Isnad* of Hadith:
The practice of *'an'ana* [4] (narration using "so-and-so said") gave rise to the invention of *Isnad* [5], a chain of narrators referred to as "narrators of Hadith." This eventually led to what came to be known as the "Science of Narrators" or "The Science of the Classes of Narrators." This field is defined as:

"A science that examines the criticism and validation of narrators using specific terminology and categorization of their reliability. It is also referred to as the 'Science of Hadith Narrators' or the 'Science of Criticism and Validation' and is a branch of the 'Science of Hadith.' It deals with the conditions of narrators concerning their adherence to the criteria for accepting or rejecting their narrations."

It is further defined as:

"A science designed to identify Hadith narrators in terms of their personal and descriptive attributes, as well as their praise and criticism."

Dr. Ahmed Subhi Mansour, in the same previously mentioned source, states:

"For this reason, scholars of criticism and validation differed in their assessments of narrators, whether to praise or criticize them and in affirming or rejecting certain Hadiths. Imam Muslim, for instance, in his Sahih, did not rely solely on what Al-Bukhari, his teacher, had said, nor did he accept all of his Hadiths. Similarly, he did not reject those Hadiths that Al-Bukhari had left out. Consequently, Sahih Muslim differs from Sahih Al-Bukhari. Later, Al-Hakim critiqued both Al-Bukhari and Muslim, while Ahmad ibn Hanbal had his own approach in his Musnad. Subsequent scholars exhibited even more variation. Since their approach was considered a

[4] **'an'ana** in Islamic hadith studies refers to a particular way of narrating a hadith where the narrator uses the Arabic word **'an** (عن), which means "from" or "on the authority of," to indicate the source of the report. This style creates ambiguity regarding whether the narrator directly heard the hadith from the source or if there is an intermediary in the chain of transmission.

[5] **Isnad** is an Arabic term that refers to the chain of narrators who transmit a report, particularly in the context of Islamic traditions and hadith (sayings or actions of the Prophet Muhammad). The isnad lists the individuals who have passed down a particular hadith, starting from the original source (such as the Prophet) to the person recording or reporting the hadith.

The quality of the isnad is crucial in determining the authenticity of a hadith. A strong isnad consists of trustworthy, reliable narrators, while a weak isnad may include narrators whose reliability is questionable, thus affecting the credibility of the hadith. Scholars of hadith, known as muhaddithun, scrutinize the isnad to assess the strength of the tradition and its chain of transmission.

scientific one based on differing viewpoints, none of them accused the others of disbelief as these are speculative human inquiries, not matters of doctrine or faith."

Let us assume, hypothetically, that Imam Muslim narrated a Hadith in his *Sahih* through a chain of six generations of narrators. Logically and obviously, the last narrator would have been someone Imam Muslim met directly, while the other five narrators were individuals he neither saw nor interacted with. How can it be proven, logically and scientifically, that these narrators truly transmitted the Hadith from the Prophet, as claimed by Imam Muslim through his teacher?

Good opinion of a narrator and belief in his truthfulness cannot guarantee that he is indeed truthful and righteous. Human beings cannot delve into the hearts of others to uncover their true intentions, as piety and integrity are internal qualities known only to Allah. Even if a narrator could relatively judge the sincerity of his teacher based on their interactions, how can he judge the sincerity of narrators he never met?

The reliance on *'an'ana* in the *isnad* of Hadith led to the invention of a chain of narrators, known as "Hadith narrators," which eventually gave rise to what became known as the "Science of Narrators." This discipline is defined as:

"A science that investigates the credibility and critique of narrators using specific terminology and their categorization into levels. It is also referred to as 'The Science of Men of Hadith' or 'The Science of Criticism and Validation.' It examines the conditions of Hadith narrators in terms of whether they meet the criteria for accepting their narrations or not."

However, the process of critiquing narrators often lacked objectivity. For instance, Al-Hafiz Al-Dhahabi accused Al-Bukhari of obfuscation (*tadlees*). In *Siyar A'lam Al-Nubala'*, under the biography of Al-Dhahli (Vol. 12, p. 275), Al-Dhahabi says:

"Many narrated from him [Al-Dhahli], including Muhammad ibn Isma'il Al-Bukhari, who practiced tadlees frequently. He would not say 'Muhammad ibn Yahya' but instead referred to him vaguely as 'Muhammad only,' or 'Muhammad ibn Khalid,' or 'Muhammad ibn Abdullah,' attributing him to his grandfather to obscure his identity due to the fallout between them. May Allah forgive them both."

Furthermore, some even accused Al-Bukhari of holding the belief that the Quran was "created in its wording." There were narrators that Al-Bukhari deemed trustworthy but were criticized by others, and narrators that he criticized but were validated by others. The process of critiquing and validating narrators was often influenced by sectarian biases. For example, narrators deemed reliable by Sunni scholars were weakened by Shia scholars, and vice versa.

Ultimately, this demonstrates that the so-called "Science of Narrators" is a historical fabrication exaggerated to legitimize the attribution of Hadiths to the Prophet, many of which he is innocent of.

The "Science of Narrators" essentially means that Hadith scholars rely on men to ascertain the truth, focusing more on "who said" than on "what was said." This raises a critical question: Were all the companions equally trustworthy, pious, and knowledgeable, or were they in reality varied in their levels of faith and understanding, necessitating caution when accepting narrations from them?

Merely raising such a question is often met with heated campaigns armed with accusations of disbelief, heresy, and apostasy. Critics are not granted the opportunity to explain their positions or present evidence because these individuals are not trained in debate, reasoning, or dialogue. Instead, they are programmed for slander and insults.

He views cursing people, insulting them, and violating their dignity as acts of devotion and worship to Allah. But since when have cursing and insulting others become acts of nearness to Allah?!

For those who sanctify the companions, all they need to do is read the Quran—particularly *Surah At-Tawbah*, which some call *The Exposer*. This chapter contains much criticism of the companions and reveals the truths about many of them. Moreover, dear follower of sanctification, you can refer to the Hadiths you call "authentic" to discover what the companions themselves said about each other. You will be shocked by the number of accusations they hurled at one another.

Here is an excerpt from Zakaria Ouzou's book *The Crime of Al-Bukhari* (p. 20), quoting from Al-Dhahabi's *History* and Ibn Abd Rabbo's *Al-'Iqd Al-Farid*, regarding the opinion of Caliph Umar ibn Al-Khattab about the companion Abu Hurairah:

"When the Prophet passed away, Caliph Umar appointed Abu Hurairah in charge of Bahrain (in the year 20 AH) after the death of Al-'Ala' ibn Al-Hadrami. However, Umar soon dismissed him and replaced him with Uthman ibn Abi Al-As Al-Thaqafi. The reason for this dismissal was that, when asked by Umar, Abu Hurairah admitted to possessing twenty thousand dirhams from the treasury of Bahrain, claiming he had earned it through trade. Umar responded, 'Enemy of Allah and Islam! Enemy of Allah and His Book! You stole the wealth of Allah when I appointed you over Bahrain, and you had no shoes. The only thing your mother, Umayma, brought you up for was tending donkeys!' Umar then struck him with a whip until he bled and forbade him from narrating Hadiths from the Prophet, saying, 'Stop narrating Hadiths, or I will banish you to the land of monkeys or the land of Daws.'"

Abu Hurairah himself confirmed this, saying:

"I could not dare say, 'The Messenger of Allah said,' until Umar passed away." Or: "If I had narrated in Umar's time what I narrate to you now, he would have struck me with his whip."

One can marvel at the companions' own opinions about each other, despite the claim that "all companions are trustworthy." Meanwhile, we are forbidden from saying even the slightest thing about some of them. But who among us will use their mind, even just once, to expose this fabrication known as "The Science of Narrators"? Who?

Most people believe that the Hadiths found in the Hadith collections were narrated from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) verbatim, both in wording and meaning, as he said them. However, most of them were narrated by meaning—what the narrators understood from the Hadith—rather than in the exact words of the Prophet. On this matter, Ibn Rajab said:

"The variation in the wording of narrations indicates that they used to narrate the Hadith by its meaning without being strict about the exact wording, as long as the meaning was consistent." (From Al-Mazari's *Al-Mu'allim*, 2/145).

Al-Mu'allimi commented:
"Differences in narrations that do not alter the meaning—such as rearranging the order, substituting one word for a synonymous one, or switching pronouns from second to first person—fall under narrating by meaning. This was common practice among them and did not cause harm." (*Imarat Al-Qubur*, p. 175, with modifications. See also Al-Tabari's *Tahdhib Al-Athar* [Umar], 1/426).

This text demonstrates that narrating Hadith by meaning was widespread and well-known among the narrators, seen as normal and unproblematic. They considered narration by meaning harmless. However, we will soon see how narration by meaning can lead to harm.

Abu Rayyah, in his book *Lights on the Muhammadan Sunnah*, provides a collection of Hadiths where the companions differed in their understanding and narration. I present these examples, dear reader, to shed light on some of these obscured facts that many scholars have overlooked.

For instance, Muslim narrated from Ibn Sirin:

"There was a time when people would not ask about the isnad of a Hadith. But when the trial occurred, they began asking about the isnad of the Hadith. In Sunan al-Tirmidhi, it is narrated that Ibn Sirin said: 'In earlier times, they would not ask about the isnad! But when the trial occurred, they started asking about the isnad, saying: If someone narrates to me, I do not doubt him, but I may doubt the one above him.'

The followers (Tabi'un) narrated from the followers of the followers (Tabi' al-Tabi'in). Examples include Al-Zuhri and Yahya ibn Sa'id Al-Ansari narrating from Malik, who was their student. Interestingly, as Al-Suyuti noted in his *Alfiyya*, there were cases where a companion narrated from a Tabi'i who narrated from another companion."

Another Hadith Example:
Among these is the Hadith narrated by Al-Sa'ib ibn Yazid, the companion, from Abdul Rahman ibn Abdul Qari', the follower, from Umar ibn Al-Khattab, from the Prophet (peace be upon him): *"Whoever misses their nightly portion of recitation or any part of it and then recites it between the Fajr prayer and the Dhuhr prayer, it will be written for them as if they recited it at night."* (Reported by Muslim in his collection).

Another example is the Hadith "The sitting ones are not equal," among others. Al-Hafiz Al-Iraqi compiled twenty such Hadiths where a companion narrated from a follower who narrated from another companion.

Criticism Among Companions:

The companions not only scrutinized the reliability of the reports from their fellow companions, as mentioned earlier, but they also went so far as to criticize each other directly. Umar, Ali, Uthman, Aisha, and Ibn Abbas, among others, were known to express doubt about some of the narrations attributed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) by their peers, sometimes outright rejecting them.

For example, Mahmoud ibn Al-Rabi'—who was young but had understood and remembered from the Prophet—narrated that ‘Itban ibn Malik Al-Ansari, a participant at Badr, said:

"The Messenger of Allah said: 'Allah has forbidden the Fire for anyone who says, "There is no god but Allah," sincerely seeking Allah’s pleasure with it.'"

This narration was retold to a group that included Abu Ayyub, the companion of the Prophet, who objected, saying:
"By Allah, I do not think the Messenger of Allah said what you claim he said!"

This Hadith and others like it were used by the Murji’ah sect to support their beliefs.

Another example is when Aisha rejected the Hadith narrated by Umar and his son Ibn Umar:
"The deceased is punished because of the crying of their family over them."

She responded:
"You are narrating something that is not false, but the listener makes mistakes. By Allah, the Messenger of Allah did not say that Allah punishes a believer because of the crying of their family over them!"

She further argued, quoting the Quran:

"No bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another." [Surah Az-Zumar: 7].

In another version, she said:

"What he meant was: The deceased is punished for their sins and mistakes, while their family cries over them."

In a third narration, she added:

"Indeed, they can hear."

These examples highlight the criticisms and disputes among the "trustworthy" companions themselves regarding narrations attributed to the Prophet. While we are often prohibited from making even the slightest critique of some companions, these incidents raise questions for those willing to think critically, even once, about the so-called "Science of Narrators." Who will?

Aisha's Rejections of Certain Narrations:

Aisha also rejected the Hadith about the Prophet seeing his Lord on the night of Isra and Mi'raj, which was narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim from 'Amir ibn Masruq. He asked Aisha:
"O Mother, did Muhammad see his Lord?"

She replied:

"What you have said has made my hair stand on end! Where are you from these three things? Whoever tells you that Muhammad saw his Lord has lied."

She then recited:

"Vision perceives Him not, but He perceives [all] vision, and He is the Subtle, the Acquainted." [Surah Al-An'am: 103]

"It is not for any human being that Allah should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a veil." [Surah Ash-Shura: 51]

She continued:

"Whoever tells you that he knows what will happen tomorrow has lied."

Then she recited:

"And no soul perceives what it will earn tomorrow." [Surah Luqman: 34]

She further added:

"Whoever tells you that he [the Prophet] concealed anything has lied."

And she recited:

"O Messenger, convey that which has been revealed to you from your Lord." [Surah Al-Ma'idah: 67]

Abu Rayyah's Observations on the Transmission of Hadiths:
In the same source, Abu Rayyah adds regarding the prohibition of writing down Hadiths:
"Those without knowledge of science or experience with its methods often assume that the Hadiths of the Prophet, as read in books or heard from narrators, have reached us in their original and precise form, articulated exactly as the Prophet spoke them, without alteration or distortion. They believe that the companions and those who followed them transmitted the Hadiths exactly as they heard them, with no changes or additions, and that these narrators were a unique group among humanity, endowed with exceptional memory, precision, and retention. It is thought that their minds were created in a way unlike other humans, such that everything they heard was engraved upon the tablets of their minds without a single word escaping or being missed."

These observations highlight the flawed assumptions about the infallibility of Hadith transmission and the perfection of the narrators' memories, challenging the belief that Hadiths were preserved in their exact original form without alteration or human error.

This understanding has undeniably left a profound impact on the thinking of religious scholars—except those whom your Lord has protected. They came to believe that these Hadiths were equivalent to the verses of the Holy Quran in their obligation to be accepted and adhered to, such that anyone who disagrees with them, rejects them, or doubts them is considered sinful, apostate, or corrupt and must be called to repentance.

Because of this, it is important to thoroughly address this issue so that people understand the truth of the matter. They should realize that the Hadiths attributed to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) were narrated by their meaning rather than their exact wording, as the narrators were unable to convey the precise text due to forgetfulness or the passage of time. Each narrator conveyed what remained in their memory of the meaning after their ability to preserve the exact wording had diminished.

Initially, there was no intention to record the Hadiths in writing, and it became common practice to narrate them by meaning. This was an accepted norm among those familiar with Hadith narration. However, later on, scholars began to differ on the permissibility of narrating Hadiths by meaning—some prohibited it, while others permitted it.

Because of the importance of this matter, it is essential to mention some of the evidence provided by both sides. No one has provided a comprehensive investigation of this issue better than the distinguished scholar Sheikh Tahir Al-Jazairi in his book *Tawjih Al-Nazar*. He said:

"Narrating Hadiths by meaning and the scholars' differing opinions on it: Scholars differed on the permissibility of narrating Hadiths by meaning. Some, such as Ibn Sirin, Tha'lab, and Abu Bakr Al-Razi, as well as Ibn Umar, are reported to have prohibited it outright. However, the majority permitted it, provided the narrator was knowledgeable about the subtleties of words, aware of the nuances in their meanings, and skilled in understanding the differences that could alter their implications. If a narrator substituted one word with another of equivalent meaning without changing the intended meaning, it was deemed permissible.

Scholars of Islamic jurisprudence have also addressed this issue. Given its significance, I would like to quote some of their statements for clarity. Abu Ishaq Al-Shirazi said in Al-Luma*: 'The preferred approach in narration is to transmit the report verbatim, in line with the statement of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him): "May Allah bless a person who hears my words, comprehends them, and then conveys them exactly as they heard."'*

And Waki' narrated from Al-Rabi' ibn Subayh, who quoted Al-Hasan as saying:

"If you have conveyed the meaning accurately, that suffices for you."

"If the meaning is not broad, then people will be destroyed. The excellence of scholars lies in their ability to memorize, ensure precision, and verify when listening—even though no great scholar is entirely free from mistakes or errors," he said. Sufyan Al-Thawri also remarked, "If I claim that I narrate to you exactly as I heard it, do not believe me. It is only the meaning." When someone said to him, "O Abu Abdullah, narrate to us as you heard it," he replied, "By Allah, that is not possible; it is only the meanings."

He also said, "If we intended to narrate Hadiths to you exactly as we heard them, we would only have been able to narrate a single Hadith!" Reliable scholars have stated that the preferred approach is to transmit Hadiths in their original wording without alterations. However, this ideal was often not followed in practice. Judge 'Iyad remarked:

"The door of narrating by meaning should be closed to prevent those who are unqualified, yet believe they are competent, from tampering with the Hadiths, as has occurred frequently among narrators both in the past and present. May Allah grant success!"

Scholars also emphasized that narrating by meaning should not apply to acts of worship that depend on specific wording, such as *takbir* (saying "Allahu Akbar") or *tashahhud* (declarations

of faith). Nonetheless, even the tashahhud has been transmitted in various wordings. Here are the most well-known versions:

1. **Tashahhud of Ibn Mas'ud:**
   In *Sahih Al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said:
   "The Messenger of Allah taught me the tashahhud, holding my hand in his, just as he taught me a surah from the Quran: 'All greetings are for Allah, and all prayers and good deeds. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and Allah's mercy and blessings. Peace be upon us and the righteous servants of Allah. I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger.'"

   This version was also narrated in the *Sunan*. In another narration, he said:
   "He taught it to me word by word." And in yet another:
   "If you say this or complete this, then you have fulfilled your prayer."
   This version was favored by Abu Hanifa, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and most scholars of Hadith.

2. **Tashahhud of Ibn Abbas:**
   In *Sahih Muslim* and the *Sunan*, Ibn Abbas narrated:
   "The Messenger of Allah used to teach us the tashahhud as he would teach us a surah from the Quran, saying: 'All blessings, all pure deeds, all prayers are for Allah. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and Allah's mercy and blessings. Peace be upon us and the righteous servants of Allah. I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.'"

3. **Tashahhud of Umar ibn Al-Khattab:**
   Malik narrated in *Al-Muwatta'* from Ibn Shihab, from Urwah ibn Al-Zubayr, from Abdurrahman ibn Abdul-Qari, that he heard Umar ibn Al-Khattab say on the minbar:
   "Say... " [the narration continues].

"The greetings, the pure blessings belong to Allah; the good, the prayers belong to Allah."

In Al-Sarakhsi's *Al-Mabsut*, the version is:

"The greetings, the flourishing, pure, blessed, and good things belong to Allah."

Malik said:

"The best tashahhud is that of Umar ibn Al-Khattab, as Umar said it on the minbar in the

presence of the companions, and they did not object, which indicates their consensus."
This was also narrated by Abu Dawood and Ibn Mardawayh in a raised marfu'[6] chain.

Tashahhud of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri:

"The greetings, the prayers, the good things. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and Allah's mercy and blessings. Peace be upon us and the righteous servants of Allah. I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."
Abu Sa'id commented:

"We used to write only the Quran and the tashahhud."

Tashahhud of Jabir:

In a Hadith narrated by Al-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah, and Al-Tirmidhi, Jabir relayed the following: *"The Messenger of Allah used to teach us the tashahhud as he would teach us a surah from the Quran: 'In the name of Allah and with Allah, the greetings...'"* Al-Hakim authenticated this narration.

Tashahhud of Aisha:

Malik narrated in *Al-Muwatta'* from Aisha, the wife of the Prophet, that she used to say in her tashahhud:

"The greetings, the good, the pure, flourishing things belong to Allah." She dropped the phrase "belong to Allah" after "greetings" and "prayers."

Examples Highlighted by Abu Rayyah:

Abu Rayyah provided further examples in the same source, such as the narration in Muslim from Talha ibn Ubaidullah:

"A man from the people of Najd, with disheveled hair, came to the Messenger of Allah. We could hear the murmur of his voice but could not understand what he said until he approached the Messenger of Allah. He asked about Islam, and the Messenger replied: 'Five prayers during the day and night.' The man asked, 'Do I have to do anything else?' The Prophet said, 'No unless you want to perform voluntary acts.' Then, he mentioned fasting during the month of Ramadan. The man asked, 'Do I have to do anything else?' The Prophet replied, 'No, unless you want to perform voluntary acts.' Then the Messenger mentioned zakat. The man asked, 'Do I have to do anything else?' The Prophet replied, 'No, unless you want to perform voluntary acts.' The man

[6] **marfūʿ (مرفوع)** chain in Islamic hadith terminology refers to a narration whose content is attributed directly to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This distinguishes it from other types of narrations, such as those attributed to companions (*sahabah*) or later authorities.

left saying, 'By Allah, I will not add to this or subtract from it.' The Prophet then said, 'He has succeeded if he is truthful.' In another narration, 'He has succeeded, by his father, if he is truthful,' and in a third, 'He entered Paradise, by his father, if he is truthful.'

Another example is the Hadith of Gabriel narrated by Abu Huraira. The Prophet said:

"Ask me." They hesitated until a man came, sat by his knees, and asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, what is Islam?' The Prophet replied: 'It is to not associate anything with Allah, to establish prayer, to give zakat, and to fast Ramadan.' The man said, 'You have spoken the truth.' Then he asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, what is faith?' The Prophet replied: 'It is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His meeting, and His messengers...'"

A man asked the Prophet (peace be upon him), "Guide me to an action that will bring me closer to Paradise and keep me away from Hell." The Prophet replied, "Worship Allah without associating anything with Him, establish prayer, give zakat, and maintain ties of kinship." Then the Messenger of Allah said, "If you adhere to what you have been commanded, you will enter Paradise."

From Al-A‘mash, Abu Salih, and Abu Sufyan, on the authority of Jabir, Al-Nu‘man ibn Qawqal asked the Messenger of Allah about the same matter. The Prophet gave a similar response, adding that if the man did no more than that, he would not falter.

Another notable Hadith pertains to marriage. A woman came to the Prophet (peace be upon him), offering herself in marriage. A man stood and said, "O Messenger of Allah, marry her to me." The man had no dowry except some knowledge of the Quran. The Prophet responded in different narrations:

- "I marry her to you with what you have of the Quran."
- "I have given her to you in marriage with what you have of the Quran."
- "You are married to her for what you know of the Quran."
- "I have handed her to you for what you have of the Quran."
- "I have given her to you for what you have of the Quran."
- "Teach her what you know of the Quran."
- "We have permitted her for you."
- "Take her with what you have."

These eight variations illustrate discrepancies in a single word within the same story, even though the source of the narration is unified. Ibn Daqiq al-‘Id commented, "This is a single word within one story, yet there is variation despite the Hadith originating from the same source!" Al-‘Alai said, "It is known that the Prophet did not say all these phrases at that moment. Therefore,

he likely said one of them, and the rest of the narrators conveyed the meaning in their own words. If someone claims that a marriage contract is valid based on the phrase 'I have given her to you,' using this Hadith as evidence, then they face the challenge of reconciling it with the other phrases."

If one insists that a specific wording was used by the Prophet, another could argue the opposite based on an alternative narration. Thus, external factors must determine the stronger evidence.

This type of Hadith inspired scholars like Sibawayh to avoid using Hadiths as primary references for linguistic and grammatical rules, as detailed elsewhere in this book.

The narration of Hadith by meaning confirms, without a doubt, that companions often transmitted the essence of the message rather than the exact words of the Prophet.

A companion interprets the words of the Prophet and attributes their understanding to him. A follower (Tabi'i) then narrates their interpretation of the companion's understanding of the Prophet's words. Those who narrate from the Tabi'i do the same, sharing their own interpretation of the Tabi'i's understanding of the companion's understanding of the Prophet. This chain of interpretation expands, with each link relying on the understanding of the one before, depending on the length of the chain of narrators in Hadith transmission.

This raises an important question: Are we dealing with the direct words of the Prophet, or are we engaging with the interpretations of narrators about each other's understandings until they reach the Prophet? It is crucial to consider the varying intellectual, cognitive, and comprehension abilities of the narrators, as they are not equal in these aspects, even if we overlook their levels of piety.

The inevitable conclusion is that we are dealing with interpretations of the meaning of the Prophet's words. This explains the discrepancies found in many Hadith narrations. Therefore, we are not encountering the direct words of the Prophet but rather narrations attributed to him.

The Crime of Hadith

One of the gravest transgressions committed in the name of Hadith is its role in sidelining the Book of Allah to take its place. This has occurred on various levels: in legislation, creed, and acts of worship. The result is that we now have a religion derived from Hadith, bearing little to no connection to the Qur'an. In fact, Hadith has, on multiple occasions, accused the Qur'an of omission, addition, and distortion, as recorded in numerous narratives found in Hadith collections. The greatest crime bequeathed to us by Hadith is the near-total marginalization of the Book of Allah from religious discourse. This marginalization reduces the Qur'an to superficial appearances and rituals often rooted in myths and fabrications.

Here, I aim to present to you, dear reader, examples of the harm Hadith has inflicted on the Qur'an, the Muslim Ummah, and humanity as a whole.

For instance, in *Sahih Muslim*, under the section of prohibitions involving five sucklings (Hadith No. 1452), it is narrated:

"Yahya bin Yahya reported that he read to Malik from Abdullah bin Abi Bakr, from Amrah, from Aisha, that she said: 'Among what was revealed in the Qur'an were ten known sucklings that establish prohibition, then it was abrogated by five known sucklings. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) passed away while these verses were still recited as part of the Qur'an.'"

This raises a critical and unavoidable question: if this narration is true, then where is this verse that Aisha claims was part of the Qur'an? If the Noble Messenger (peace be upon him) passed away while it was still recited, does this not constitute an explicit accusation of the Qur'an's alteration, omission, or incompletion?

Yet, even today, there are those who lack the courage to boldly and openly declare that such narrations are fabrications against our mother, Aisha, slander against the Messenger of Allah, and lies against the Book of Allah. Allah has promised to preserve His Book from any alteration, addition, or omission.

In another narration from *Sahih Muslim* (Volume 2, Page 726, Hadith No. 1740), it is narrated:

"Suwaid bin Sa'id narrated to us, saying, 'Ali bin Mushir narrated to us from Dawood from Abi Harb bin Abi...'"

The text continues, showcasing further examples where Hadith traditions conflict with the principles and integrity of the Qur'an, leading to significant theological and doctrinal discrepancies.

This reflection calls for a reassessment of the relationship between the Qur'an and Hadith, ensuring that the former remains central to Islamic faith and practice, as Allah intended.

Al-Ash'ari sent a message to the Quran reciters of Basra, and 300 men who had memorized the Quran entered to meet him. He said to them, "You are the best of the people of Basra and its reciters. So recite [the Quran], and let not the time grow long upon you, lest your hearts harden as the hearts of those before you hardened. We used to recite a surah (chapter) which we likened in length and severity to Surah Al-Tawbah, but I have forgotten it except that I remember from it: *'If the son of Adam had two valleys of wealth, he would seek a third, and nothing fills the belly of the son of Adam except dust.'* And we used to recite a surah which we likened to one of the Musabbihat (chapters beginning with praise to Allah), but I have forgotten it except that I remember from it: *'O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? It will be recorded as a witness against you, and you will be questioned about it on the Day of Resurrection.'*

Something similar to this is found in Sahih Al-Bukhari, in the Book of Ar-Riqaq, Hadith No. 5957. It was narrated to me by Muhammad, who reported from Mukhlid, who reported from Ibn Jurayj, who said: "I heard Ata say: I heard Ibn Abbas say: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say: *'If the son of Adam had a valley of wealth, he would desire another like it, and nothing fills the eyes of the son of Adam except dust. And Allah forgives the one who repents.'* Ibn Abbas said: 'I do not know if this is from the Quran or not.' Ibn Al-Zubayr also said this on the pulpit."

It is astonishing! How could Ibn Abbas, the scholar of this nation, not distinguish between the words of Allah and the words of men? In Muslim's narration, it is mentioned that there was a long and extensive surah that the Companions forgot, and it was comparable in length to Surah Al-Tawbah. Is this not a clear claim from the two authentic collections (Bukhari and Muslim) that a surah was lost from the Quran? Exalted is Allah above what they attribute to Him, and His Book is far removed from what they fabricate.

Al-Bukhari and Muslim also reported through their chains from Ibn Abbas that Umar ibn Al-Khattab delivered a sermon upon his return from his last pilgrimage, saying: *"Indeed, Allah sent Muhammad (peace be upon him) with the truth and revealed to him the Book. Among what was revealed to him was the verse of stoning, which we recited, understood, and memorized. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) stoned [adulterers], and we stoned after him. If time extends upon people, someone might say, 'By Allah, we do not find the verse of stoning in the Book of Allah,' and thus they go astray by abandoning an obligation."*

It was revealed by Allah. (Al-Bukhari, Vol. 8, p. 208; Book of Stoning Pregnant Women, Hadith No. 6328; and Muslim, Vol. 4, p. 167, and Vol. 5, p. 116). It was also attributed to Umar:

"We used to recite in what we read of the Book of Allah: 'Do not abandon your fathers, for it is

disbelief on your part to abandon your fathers.' Or: *'It is disbelief on your part to abandon your fathers.'* (Al-Bukhari, Vol. 8, p. 208, Hadith No. 6328).

Umar said:

'If people did not say that Umar added to the Book of Allah, I would have written the verse of stoning with my own hand.' (Al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, pp. 152 and 135, Book of Testimonies; Al-Hakim in Wilayah Al-Qadha). The reader might be shocked by what we have narrated here from the two authentic collections and also by the crude style attributed to what is described as a verse from the Book of Allah: *'The verse of stoning the elderly man and elderly woman if they commit adultery.'* And we find some adherents spinning convoluted theories about the abrogation of recitation that their imagination has fabricated to justify and pass off this nonsense.

In the same context, we find:

Musa narrated to us from Abu Awana from Mughirah from Ibrahim on the authority of Alqamah: I entered Al-Sham and prayed two rak'ahs. I said, *"O Allah, make it easy for me to find a companion."* Then I saw an old man approaching. When he came near, I said, *"I hope he will be an answered prayer."* He asked, "Where are you from?" I said, *"From the people of Kufa." He said, "Wasn't there among you the Companion of the two sandals, the pillow, and the ablution vessel? Wasn't there among you the one who was protected from the devil? Wasn't there among you the Companion of the secret, which no one else knew?"* He then asked, *"How did Ibn Umm Abd recite 'By the night'?"* I recited: *'By the night as it covers, and by the day as it appears, and by the male and the female.'* He said, *"The Prophet (peace be upon him) recited it to me in this manner, placing his mouth on my mouth."* They continued this until they nearly convinced me to reject it. (Al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 3477; see also No. 4562).

Where has *"and what He created"* gone? There is a stark difference between *'and by the male and the female'* and *'and by what He created, male and female.'* Exalted is Allah above what they fabricate.

Something similar is attributed to the Mother of the Believers, Aisha, in *Fath Al-Bari* by Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, where he narrates from Muslim on the authority of Aisha that she dictated in her mushaf[7]: *'Maintain the prayers and the middle prayer – and the Asr prayer –'* and she said, "I heard it from the Messenger of Allah."

[7] **Mushaf (مصحف)** in Islamic terminology refers to the physical, written copy of the Quran in book form. It is distinct from the Quran as the divine revelation, which Muslims believe is the literal word of Allah as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

(Fath al-Bari in the commentary on Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 8, p. 158). Also, in Sahih al-Bukhari, in the Book of the Virtues of the Quran, under the chapter on forgetting the Quran, and likewise in the chapter on those who see no harm in saying "such-and-such surah" and "such-and-such verse." Muslim also narrated in the Book of Travelers' Shortening of Prayers, under the chapter on the command to revise the Quran and the dislike of saying "I forgot such-and-such verse," on the authority of Aisha, who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) heard a man reciting a surah at night and said, "May Allah have mercy on him; he reminded me of such-and-such verse which I had forgotten from such-and-such surah."

Perhaps the discerning and wise reader will conclude, from this vague and ambiguous style of "such-and-such" and "such-and-such," that this is merely a fabrication attributed to the Prophet of Mercy, who was entrusted with delivering the revelation to all mankind. How could this noble Messenger forget a verse from the Book of his Lord and then be reminded of it by another individual from his nation? It is strange that such statements are accepted about their Prophet out of fear of contradicting a book whose authorship we cannot ascertain, as we shall soon see in the upcoming chapters of this book.

We find ourselves compelled to reject this nonsense, just as we are compelled to critique those who describe us with terms that diminish their faith as much as their understanding and reason diminish from Allah's intellect and the comprehension of His most noble Messenger. All the interpretations that used abrogation as an escape to justify what was mentioned in the authentic collections have failed in the face of the solid truth, which is beyond dispute: the hadiths do not accept such interpretations. For example, what is attributed to the Mother of the Believers, Aisha, regarding the verse on prohibiting specific nursing relations clearly states that it was among what was recited from the Book of Allah until it was eaten by a domestic goat while it was under her bed. Similarly, what is attributed to Umar ibn al-Khattab about the verse on the elderly man and woman (adulterers) indicates that he almost added it to the Quran, but fear of people prevented him from doing so. By accepting what we are discussing, we would encourage atheists to challenge us and alienate people from our religion. Therefore, O beloved ones of the noble Messenger, let us rise to an act of faith and excellence based on the Quran.

Falsehood does not approach it from before it or from behind it, and its wisdom lies in the pure and untainted intellect enriched by the clarity of the Quran and its evident logic, which thinkers, philosophers, and researchers have described as rationality solid as a rock. So come forth, as there is no room for retreat; come forth, as there is no place for hesitation. Come forth, then, to cast away the myths of the past and embrace the rationality of the present.

One of the outcomes of the hadiths' impact on our nation is that it has made it a backward nation that believes in superstition, opposes science, and rejects reason. Among the examples from the hadith literature that illustrate the calamities within these collections, filled as they are with trivialities, superstitions, and myths, is the following:

Among the strange and laughable things in Sahih al-Bukhari is the hadith attributing to the Prophet of Mercy the command to kill the gecko (known as "abu baris" in the eastern regions or "taghleet" in the Maghreb). It is a type of lizard that lives on the ceilings of old or abandoned houses. According to Sahih al-Bukhari, it was believed to have blown on the fire set against our master Ibrahim (peace be upon him and our Prophet the best of prayers and peace). Can this nonsense be believed?

(Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 3359): Narrated by Ubaidullah ibn Musa, or Ibn Salam, from Ibn Jurayj, from Abdul Hamid ibn Jubair, from Saeed ibn Al-Musayyib, from Umm Sharik (may Allah be pleased with her), that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: “Kill the gecko, for it used to blow on Ibrahim (peace be upon him).”

In Sahih al-Bukhari, under the chapter "What should be avoided regarding bad omens," Hadith No. 5093, narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both): The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, “Bad omens are in a woman, a house, and a horse.”

Can it be rational that our noble Prophet would say such a thing while reciting Allah’s words:

“When one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief. He hides himself from the people because of the ill of what he has been informed. Should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the ground? Unquestionably, evil is what they decide” (Surah An-Nahl, 16:59).

Would our Prophet liken a woman to a horse or a house, equating her to an animal or an inanimate object? Is it not disgraceful what is attributed to Sahih al-Bukhari in this regard? Is it not abhorrent and unimaginable that our noble Prophet, who said, *“Only the noble among you will honor women, and only the wicked will disgrace them,”* would utter such words? Could the Prophet, who is the most noble, ever be dishonorable?!!!

In Sahih al-Bukhari, the author confirms that Allah has decreed the share of every human being in adultery, meaning that humans are destined and have no escape. Thus, the clear principle of choice, as expressed in the verse: *"And We guided him to the two paths. But he has not broken through the difficult pass."* (Surah Al-Balad: 10-11), becomes meaningless. Even more concerning is that this negates the meaning of Allah’s command: *"And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse."* Why would Allah forbid something He has already decreed upon us? Furthermore, from this hadith, we can infer that all messengers had their share of adultery, being descendants of Adam, including our noble Messenger, as well as the honorable companions and righteous predecessors. According to this, everyone has their share of adultery, making us the offspring of adulterers. This is what is stated in the most authentic books, as they boast:

Al-Bukhari (Hadith No. 6243) narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

"Indeed, Allah has written for the son of Adam his share of adultery, which he inevitably commits. The adultery of the eye is looking, the adultery of the tongue is speaking, the soul desires and wishes, and the private parts confirm or deny all of that."

The books did not stop here but also insulted our Prophet in multiple instances. For example, in this hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari accuses the Prophet of entering the house of Umm Haram, the wife of Ubadah ibn al-Samit, in her husband's absence, eating there, sleeping, and letting her comb his hair. According to this, the Prophet secluded himself with a woman in her husband's absence, slept there, ate, and allowed her to comb his hair for lice. The purest and most complete of men is portrayed as having lice – far be it from him. Yet, as usual, the worshippers of men will rush to defend this fabrication about the Prophet and will bombard us with insults and curses. We say to them: Your insults and curses will return to you, and we will stand firm to defend our greatest Messenger against narratives that insult him and undermine his prophethood and character. Here is the text of the hadith as narrated in Sahih al-Bukhari:

(Hadith No. 6600) Narrated by Abdullah ibn Yusuf, reported by Malik from Ishaq ibn Abdullah ibn Abi Talha, who heard Anas ibn Malik say:

"The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to visit Umm Haram bint Milhan, who was married to Ubadah ibn al-Samit. One day, he visited her, and she served him food and started combing his hair. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) fell asleep, and when he woke up, he was laughing. She asked, 'What makes you laugh, O Messenger of Allah?'"

Some of my people were shown to me as warriors in the path of Allah, riding the crest of this sea, kings on thrones or like kings on thrones" (Ishaq doubted). She said, "I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, pray to Allah that He makes me one of them.' The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) prayed for her. Then he laid his head down, and after some time, he woke up laughing. I asked, 'What makes you laugh, O Messenger of Allah?' He said, 'Some people from my nation were shown to me as warriors in the path of Allah, as he had said before.' She said, 'I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, pray to Allah that He makes me one of them.' He said, 'You are among the first.' So, she sailed across the sea during the time of Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, and when she exited the sea, she fell from her mount and died."

Among the strange and laughable oddities and the excessive myths drowning in superstition that foster absolute ignorance is what is found in Sahih al-Bukhari, where it is attributed to the noble Prophet (peace be upon him) that he considered a tribe of Israel lost! A ridiculous myth from the strange fabrications of Sahih al-Bukhari, which ignorant people will defend merely because it is found in this book, overflowing with superstitions and insults to the Prophetic and divine ranks.

Here is the hadith:

Narrated Musa ibn Ismail, reported by Wahb from Khalid from Muhammad from Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) on the authority of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who said: "A group from the children of Israel was lost, and I do not see them but as rats. If camel milk is placed before them, they do not drink it, and if sheep milk is placed before them, they drink it." He narrated this to Ka'b, who asked, "Did you hear the Prophet (peace be upon him) say this?" He replied, "Yes." Ka'b asked him several times, and he said, "Then read the Torah." (Hadith No. 3129)

Another laughable story in Sahih al-Bukhari narrates that a monkey committed adultery, so the other monkeys stoned it to death, with the Tabi'i (follower) Amr ibn Maymun participating in the stoning (some consider him a Companion). This is found in the so-called "most authentic book after the Book of Allah." The text of the hadith is:

Narrated Amr ibn Maymun: "During the pre-Islamic period of ignorance, I saw a monkey that had committed adultery, and the other monkeys gathered around and stoned it. I also stoned it with them." (Hadith No. 3849)

This hadith, along with others, has been criticized and declared weak by scholars like Al-Albani and others, for those who believe everything in Sahih al-Bukhari is authentic.

Another strange hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari contradicts modern scientific knowledge.

A clear and definitive hadith appears in Sahih al-Bukhari**,** in the Book of the Interpretation of the Quran, Hadith No. 4524, which states:

"Abu Na'im narrated to us, reporting from Al-A'mash, from Ibrahim al-Taymi, from his father, from Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: 'I was with the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the mosque at sunset. He said, "O Abu Dharr, do you know where the sun sets?" I said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said, "It goes and prostrates beneath the Throne of Allah. That is the statement of Allah: 'And the sun runs on its fixed course for a term (decreed). That is the decree of the Almighty, the All-Knowing' (Surah Ya-Sin: 38)."

This hadith suggests that the sun when it sets, goes to prostrate beneath the Throne of Allah. This is evident from the hadith and contradicts scientific knowledge, which establishes that sunset in one region corresponds to sunrise in another, resulting from the Earth's rotation rather than the sun's movement. However, some interpretations continue to prioritize this narrative in Sahih al-Bukhari, attributing it to the Prophet (peace be upon him) rather than considering it a possible misunderstanding or error by the compiler of the text.

Another example of a hadith that undermines the dignity of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Sahih al-Bukhari is the narration that claims he engaged in sexual relations with all his wives (eleven at the time) within the span of one hour. The narration is as follows:

Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Ghusl (Ablution)
Narrated Muhammad ibn Bashar, narrated Mu'adh ibn Hisham, narrated my father, from Qatadah, narrated Anas ibn Malik, who said: *"The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to go around (have relations with) all his wives in one hour, during the day or night, and they were eleven."* Anas added, *"I asked Qatadah, 'Did he have the strength for that?' Qatadah replied, 'We used to say that he was given the strength of thirty men.'" Sa'id narrated from Qatadah that Anas reported: *"There were nine women."* (Hadith No. 265)

Moreover, Sahih al-Bukhari**,** in its first book, contains a narration accusing the Prophet (peace be upon him) of attempting suicide—an unthinkable and offensive claim. Here is the text from Sahih al-Bukhari, in the Book of Revelation, under the chapter titled *"The Beginning of Revelation to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him)."*

This narration and others raise significant concerns about the interpretations and implications attributed to the noble Prophet.

"Until the Prophet (peace be upon him) became so saddened, as we have been told, that he attempted several times to throw himself off the peaks of high mountains. However, some people still believe that everything in Sahih al-Bukhari is authentic. Do you not reason?!!!!

There is a hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari that is impossible for anyone to understand or explain based on its text alone. Even the most knowledgeable and insightful people cannot comprehend it fully. It is found in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Interpretation of the Quran, Hadith No. 4693:

Narrated Ali ibn Abdullah, narrated Sufyan, narrated Abidah ibn Abi Lubabah, from Zirr ibn Hubaysh:

'I asked Ubay ibn Ka'b, saying, "O Abu Al-Mundhir, your brother Ibn Mas'ud says such and such." He replied, "Indeed, I asked the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), and he said to me, 'It was said to me, so I said.' We therefore say as the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said."'

We should not fail to note also that the books of hadith tell us, as recorded in *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala* by Al-Dhahabi and *Al-Muntazam* by Ibn Al-Jawzi, that the Companions neglected the burial of the Prophet for three days until his abdomen swelled, as they were preoccupied with something they considered more important: securing power and leadership. Moreover, jurists and hadith scholars contradicted the Quran and science by asserting that the duration of pregnancy could extend to five years, relying, of course, on narrations.

The last examples quoted from Sahih al-Bukhari compel us to ask the question: Who authored this book? And what is the true relationship between Sheikh Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari and this book? This is what we will uncover in the remaining chapters of this book.

Chapter 3: The Legend of Al-Bukhari

1. Why Al-Bukhari?
2. Biography of Dreams
3. The Legend
4. The Legend of Extraordinary Memory
5. The Legend of *Sahih Al-Bukhari*

Why Al-Bukhari?

After briefly discussing in the previous chapters the issues surrounding the documentation of hadiths, how the Companions were cautious and refrained from writing them down, as well as how the Rightly Guided Caliphs followed the same approach as instructed by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), and how the narrations became confused regarding whether to document hadiths or not, and what the prevailing and most credible opinion on the matter is, we also addressed the circumstances that accompanied and encouraged the documentation of hadiths. Additionally, we highlighted the flaws that resulted from this documentation, leading us to delve into the so-called "science of hadith" and its implications for Islam and the Muslim community.

We discussed how it shifted the Qur'an from its central role in life to be replaced by narrations, setting the stage for this chapter, where we address the myth of Al-Bukhari. Here, we will examine a set of myths associated with the personality of Muhammad ibn Ismail Al-Bukhari. The reader will quickly realize, without much effort, that these are legends falsely attributed to this individual, serving as an electric fence erected around him to deter any criticism or even rational examination aimed at discerning truth from falsehood.

The first question we seek to address as we discuss the personality of Al-Bukhari and the book attributed to him, famously known as *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, is: Why Al-Bukhari? This often prompts inquisitions of intent, as is customary, in a manner akin to an inquisition court. This is the standard response of those who venerate the scholars and their heritage to anyone attempting to use reason and intellect to question inherited texts critically.

Despite this, we will attempt to quench their curiosity by addressing their confrontational question, saying to them: "Our inquiry into the inherited persona of Al-Bukhari and the book attributed to him stems from our interest in critiquing the inherited religious tradition we have received from our forefathers."

And from our ancestors without our consultation, we strive to understand and analyze them, to identify their luminous fragments that are suitable for our era and circumstances so we may benefit from them, distinguishing the trivial from the substantial, the rational from the mythical, and the truths from the legends.

Perhaps the most influential religious figure in Islamic history is "Muhammad ibn Ismail Al-Bukhari," whose character has been so exalted by some that they elevated him to the rank of prophet or even higher. Similarly, the book attributed to him, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, has been raised to a level where it is compared to the Book of Allah. For these reasons, and given such considerations, I believe that this personality no longer belongs to itself but has become the rightful subject of study and inquiry for all researchers and interested individuals. It is imperative to scrutinize and investigate the truths behind the claims surrounding it, as well as the authenticity and credibility of the reports attributed to it.

Therefore, I believe it is our right to summon this personality to our present time, not because we wish to do so but because it has been imposed upon us over centuries by scholars and clerics. It has been so glorified that it has earned the title of "The Commander of the Faithful in Hadith." I find myself puzzled by such titles, wondering when Hadith became an empire requiring a commander. However, as is typical of those who manufacture paper heroes through propagandist methods, they can bestow upon whomever they choose whatever they wish as long as it remains mere words. Excessive praise, after all, is a hallmark of Arab culture.

Throughout history, successive rulers have opened their courts to poets skilled in crafting eloquent expressions and ornate descriptions, seeking to gain favor with the caliph or be rewarded with sacks of gold and silver. They competed and outdid one another in their praise, elevating their subjects to statuses higher than that of prophecy, simply to please the praised or secure financial rewards.

An example of this is mentioned in the book *Al-'Iqd* (Volume 2, Page 139), illustrating how caliphs loved flattery and how poets exaggerated their praise to the point of deifying their subjects. It is stated, "The poets gathered at the gate of Al-Mu'tasim, who sent to them: 'Who among you is capable of crafting verses like the following...'"

Al-Numeiri praised the Commander of the Faithful, Al-Rashid, with the following verses:

"Indeed, virtues and benevolence are rivers,
And God placed you where they converge.
When you elevate a matter, God raises it,
And whoever you bring low, among the people, remains low.
Whoever is not protected by God's trust
Will not benefit even from the five daily prayers.
If rain is withheld, your hands compensate,
And if matters constrict, you expand them."

Al-Mu’tasim said, "Let him enter." But Muhammad ibn Wahb responded, "Among us are those who can compose better." He then recited:

"Three illuminate the world with their brightness:
The radiant sun at dawn, Abu Ishaq, and the moon.
Their actions are reflected in all blessings:
The rain, the lion, and the steadfast resolve."

Al-Mu’tasim ordered his entry and generously rewarded him.

When we examine what has been written about Sheikh Al-Bukhari, we find it largely resembles this excessive praise that has historically characterized Arab culture. Either a person is praised to the heavens or reviled to the depths of hell—there is no middle ground. This polarized approach

is the foundation of "Ilm al-Rijal" (Science of Narrators), which alternates between praise and condemnation, with no other options.

Therefore, it is our right to seek the truth unadorned by exaggeration, embellishment, favoritism, or hyperbole. Al-Bukhari, after all, was human, not an infallible angel immune to error.

One of the greatest calamities that led an entire nation astray is its distortion of truths and glorification of the past and its figures. This mindset perpetuates the phrase, often parroted without understanding or scrutiny, *"The goodness lies in following those who preceded us, and the evil in innovating beyond them."* Consequently, a billion-strong nation has been moving backward instead of forward, adhering only to the understanding of the predecessors and their knowledge. Questions like, *"Do you have a precedent for this?"* have become shackles suppressing freedom of opinion and thought—the very foundation of progress.

For instance, Ibn Kathir, in his book *Al-Bidaya wa Al-Nihaya,* includes a passage about Sheikh Al-Bukhari that we will reproduce in this work. It demonstrates how tongues engage in exaggerated praise to the point of fabrication.

In the realm of individuals who have been elevated from human status to that of legend and myth, we find descriptions such as this:

"He is Muhammad ibn Ismail ibn Ibrahim ibn Al-Mughira ibn Bardizbah Al-Ju'fi, their freedman, Abu Abdullah Al-Bukhari, the memorizer and leader of hadith scholars in his time, the one emulated in his era, and superior to all his peers. His Sahih is so revered that rain would be sought through its recitation, and scholars unanimously agree on its acceptance and the authenticity of its content, as do all Muslims." (*Al-Bidaya wa Al-Nihaya*, 28/11–31) *by Imam Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir, may Allah have mercy on him.*

For this reason, we have dedicated this chapter to examining the true nature of Sheikh Al-Bukhari. We aim to understand how his life was surrounded by a veil of myths and exaggerations, both regarding his person and the book attributed to him, leaving no room for the exercise of reason and logic. Those who came after simply followed what the predecessors said without critically examining it through the lens of reason, allowing myths to spread, take hold, and dominate minds.

Indeed, it has become far easier for some to attribute falsehoods to the beloved Prophet (peace be upon him) than to ascribe error to Al-Bukhari. This is evident in the immense hostility faced by anyone who criticizes *Sahih Al-Bukhari*. Such criticism is often framed as a defense of the Messenger of Allah, with claims that the controversial or problematic narrations in the book are true and reflect actions genuinely carried out by the Prophet since "Al-Bukhari does not err—only Allah is free from error."

For these reasons, the focus on Al-Bukhari is warranted.

Biography of Dreams

If one examines the biography of Al-Bukhari as transmitted in historical books and biographical accounts, one will find it heavily focused on dreams to highlight his virtue and uniqueness in an extraordinary way. What is even stranger is that those who narrate these stories—nothing more than figments of imagination—present them as absolute truth.

Readers may be astonished by the glorification of Sheikh Al-Bukhari based on dreams, which should never serve as the foundation for anything. Yet the scholars built their belief in Al-Bukhari and his book, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, upon such myths, as we shall see.

One of the first myths and fabrications attached to the biography of Sheikh Muhammad ibn Ismail Al-Bukhari dates back to his childhood. Historians narrate that he lost his eyesight at a young age. His mother, it is said, dreamt of Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him), who appeared to her and said: *"O woman, Allah has restored your son's eyesight due to your frequent weeping or your constant supplication."* When she awoke, her son's eyesight had indeed been restored. (*Tabaqat al-Hanabila* by Ibn Abi Ya'la, Vol. 1, p. 274, and *Kunuz al-Dhahab* by Abu Dharr Ahmad ibn Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn Khalil, Vol. 2, p. 81).

The first notable point in this story is the extraordinary significance attributed to Imam Al-Bukhari, to the extent that God allegedly conveyed a message to his mother through the Prophet Ibrahim in a dream, informing her that her son's eyesight had been restored—either because of her weeping or her supplication. It is as if Al-Bukhari's mother were a prophet herself, receiving divine revelation!

Moreover, why would God need to inform Al-Bukhari's mother in a dream that her son's eyesight had been restored? Could she not have realized this as soon as her son opened his eyes and saw for himself, then told her? Why the theatricality of such a dream? It is well-known that when someone regains their eyesight, they can easily notice the change and share the news with those around them. Why, then was such an elaborate narrative constructed?

Was it specifically Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) who delivered the message to Al-Bukhari's mother? Was this because he is the "father of prophets" to suggest an implied connection between Al-Bukhari and prophethood? If so, why didn't the narrator simply claim that she dreamt of the Prophet Muhammad? And how could she even be certain that the figure she supposedly saw in her dream—if indeed she had such a dream—was Prophet Ibrahim?

Moreover, there is evident inconsistency in the narratives. In one version, the dream figure tells her that her son's eyesight was restored due to her weeping, while in another, it was due to her supplications. These are entirely different reasons, yet the fabricated nature of the tales is apparent in both versions. The sole purpose of such myths seems to be to create an aura of divine care surrounding the child Al-Bukhari, setting the stage for his later portrayal as a legend. Dreams and visions are thus exploited to mythologize his life, as we shall see.

It is well-established that historical evidence must be based on facts, not myths. How can the historical credibility of such a narrative be verified? It cannot, as it is impossible to investigate people's dreams. Consequently, accepting or believing such a tale is purely an act of blind faith based on a lack of evidence. As such, it holds no value as a historical truth.

What is peculiar is the significant and recurring presence of dreams in Al-Bukhari's biography, all aiming to portray him as a mythical figure with a special connection to the unseen. These dreams are presented to people as though they were historical facts. Unfortunately, there are those who believe in them, celebrate them, and even use them as evidence when defending the character of Al-Bukhari.

In the same vein of myth-making, Jalal al-Din Al-Suyuti mentions in *Tadrib al-Rawi* (Volume 1, Page 92) in his discussion of the reasons for Al-Bukhari's compilation of *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, the following:

"The second [reason] in the matters of the Sahih..." (continuing in the next section).

The Compilation of Dreams

Al-Bukhari, as narrated by historians, compiled his *Sahih* based on two different accounts. The first was recounted by Ibrahim ibn Ma'qil al-Nasafi, who said:

"We were with Ishaq ibn Rahwayh, who said, 'If only you could compile a concise book of the authentic Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him).' This idea took root in my heart, and I began compiling the Sahih."

The second account is a dream narrated by Al-Bukhari himself:

"I saw the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) in a dream, and it was as though I were standing before him, holding a fan to keep flies away from him. I asked a dream interpreter about this, and he told me, 'You are fanning away lies from the Messenger of Allah.' This vision compelled me to compile the Sahih. I completed it in sixteen years."

Thus, the chain of dreams continues. After Al-Bukhari's mother claimed to have dreamt of Prophet Ibrahim informing her that her son's sight had been restored—either due to her weeping in one narration or her supplication in another—this time, it is Al-Bukhari himself who, according to historians, had a dream in which he was fanning away lies from the Prophet's face. A dream interpreter then confirmed its meaning, suggesting that Al-Bukhari was defending the Prophet from fabrications. This dream, it is claimed, was the reason for his compilation of Sahih Al-Bukhari.

If Al-Bukhari had not dreamt of himself fanning away flies—since only flies or flying insects like mosquitoes can be fanned from a face—then, according to this narrative, Islam as we know it might not exist today. For many, there is no Islam without Sahih Al-Bukhari.

Meanwhile, the alternative account attributes the compilation to a suggestion made during a gathering with Ishaq ibn Rahwayh, who proposed the idea of compiling an authentic and concise book of the Prophet's Sunnah.

Which of these two accounts should we believe? Both are attributed to Sheikh Al-Bukhari, but many contemporary scholars favor the dream narrative, likely because it aligns with their own fascination with dreams, visions, and myths. This narrative also suits the mythical portrayal of Sheikh Al-Bukhari as a larger-than-life figure.

The widespread preference for the dream-based account highlights an inclination toward elevating Al-Bukhari to a legendary status. This fascination with dreams continues to resonate with some of today's scholars, who build their religious narratives on such extraordinary and unverifiable claims.

The Commander of the Faithful in Hadith

The chain of dreams connected to Al-Bukhari and his mythology is astounding. It begins with a dream involving his mother, who, while he was a child, received a message from Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) about her son's eyesight being restored. It continues with the famous dream of Al-Bukhari himself, where he is fanning flies away from the face of the Prophet, symbolizing lies. Interestingly, the dream interpreters identified flies as the representation of lies, suggesting that Al-Bukhari was tasked with defending the Prophet against falsehoods.

One wonders why scholars of hadith and biography did not incorporate the term "flies" into their technical terminology for describing unreliable narrators. Instead of calling someone a liar (*kadhdhāb*), they could have used *dhabbāb* (a fly), in keeping with Al-Bukhari's dream and its interpretation!

But the dream sequences don't stop there. They extend to those associated with Al-Bukhari, as Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq Najmi recounts in *Adhwaa 'ala al-Sahihayn* (page 78), quoting Abu Zayd al-Marwazi. Al-Marwazi narrates:

"I was sleeping between the Yamani corner and the station of Ibrahim, and I saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a dream. He said to me, 'O Abu Zayd, how long will you study the book of Al-Shafi'i and not study my book?' I asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, what is your book?' He replied, 'The Sahih of Muhammad ibn Ismail Al-Bukhari.'"

This narrative is also referenced in Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani's introduction to *Fath al-Bari* in the first chapter.

Once again, dreams are used to construct myths, granting Al-Bukhari and his *Sahih* an aura of divine endorsement. This time, it is not Al-Bukhari himself but a student of his student, Al-

Marwazi, who claims to have seen the Prophet in a dream, chastising him for studying the works of Al-Shafi'i instead of what he calls “my book,” referring to Al-Bukhari’s *Sahih*.

What is surprising here is that in this dream, one might expect the Prophet to emphasize the Qur’an—the divine book he was sent to deliver as a revelation from Allah. Yet, in this account, the Prophet allegedly declares Al-Bukhari’s *Sahih* as "his book," an assertion that undermines the Qur’an’s unique status.

Thus concludes this episode in the series of dreams that serve as the foundation for the mythology surrounding Al-Bukhari, blending fabricated visions into his biography to elevate him and his *Sahih* to near-sacred status.

The Audacity of the Narrator and the Myth of Dreams

The audacity of some narrators reaches a point where, through the fabrication of a dream, they attribute authorship of an obscure book—whose origins will be discussed in the coming chapters—to the Messenger of Allah himself. This claim not only constructs an "electric fence" around Al-Bukhari and the *Sahih* attributed to him but also implies that rejecting *Sahih Al-Bukhari* or any of its narrations is tantamount to rejecting the Prophet. After all, is the book not allegedly the Prophet’s own? This assertion is supported by a supposed testimony from the Prophet himself in a dream seen by someone who was born more than 300 years after the Prophet’s death.

Yet myths, no matter how absurd, find believers. History books are rife with such fabrications derived from claims of dreams. Despite this, some proudly consider such claims a form of "science," wielding the weapon of excommunication against anyone who dares to think critically or exercise their intellect.

Using one’s intellect is essential to being human; it is a divine gift that forms the basis of moral accountability. The Qur’an itself repeatedly encourages the use of reason and condemns those who do not, likening them to livestock—or worse:

"Indeed, the worst of living creatures in the sight of Allah are the deaf and dumb who do not use reason." [Surah Al-Anfal, 8:22]

The chain of dreams forming the foundation of the Al-Bukhari legend is further reinforced by accounts found in Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani’s introduction to *Fath Al-Bari*. In the first chapter, titled *Hady Al-Sari*, he narrates:

"I heard Al-Farbari say: 'I heard Muhammad ibn Abi Hatim Al-Bukhari, the copyist, say: I saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a dream as if he was walking and Muhammad ibn Ismail was walking behind him. Whenever the Prophet lifted his foot, Muhammad ibn Ismail would place his foot in the same spot.'”

Here is yet another dream, adding "voltage" to the electric fence surrounding Al-Bukhari and the book attributed to him. This dream aims to portray Al-Bukhari as following precisely in the footsteps of the Prophet, thereby affirming that everything recorded in *Sahih Al-Bukhari* aligns perfectly with the teachings of the Prophet.

These repeated dreams, woven into the narrative, serve to mythologize Al-Bukhari and Sahih Al-Bukhari. They elevate both to an untouchable status, making them immune to criticism and ensuring that the book becomes almost as sacred as the Qur'an itself. This strategic sanctification creates a powerful deterrent against questioning its content, positioning *Sahih Al-Bukhari* as a cornerstone of faith.

The audacity of some narrators reaches an incredible level, where through the fabrication of a dream, they attribute a book—of unclear authorship, as we will explore in the coming chapters—as if it were authored by the Messenger of Allah himself. This fabrication creates an "electric fence" around Al-Bukhari, and the *Sahih* attributed to him, making any criticism of the book or its narrations a direct challenge to the Prophet himself. But is this book truly the Prophet's book, as claimed by such dream narratives?

Are we to believe in the sanctity of *Sahih Al-Bukhari* based on the dreams allegedly seen by certain individuals? Or based on the absurd notion that the Prophet, who had completed his message and fulfilled his trust, continued to send revelations through dreams centuries after his passing just to confirm that *Sahih Al-Bukhari* was free from lies and perfectly aligned with his Sunnah?

As bizarre and foolish as these claims are, they form the foundation of some of the fantastical stories found in hadith literature about Al-Bukhari. Sadly, these myths are presented and accepted without question.

For those encountering these stories for the first time, the shock may be overwhelming. Many people who revere Al-Bukhari assume that the evidence of his knowledge, precision, and brilliance is based on scientific proof and verified historical facts. They do not realize that much of it is merely exaggerated or fabricated dreams.

While jurists agree that dreams cannot be a basis for legislation, hadith scholars have built entire beliefs and historical "facts" upon them. They have taken dreams as "knowledge" and declared them historical truths, irrespective of their lack of credibility.

One recurring myth is the dream in which Al-Bukhari is depicted as walking in the exact footsteps of the Prophet. This narrative was not exclusive to Muhammad ibn Abi Hatim Al-Bukhari, the copyist. Still, it was also attributed to Najm ibn Fudayl, as relayed by Al-Farbari and recorded by Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani in the introduction to *Fath Al-Bari*. Both accounts claim that Al-Bukhari was seen in dreams following the Prophet's footsteps precisely, suggesting his complete adherence to the Prophet's teachings.

The attempt to establish that Al-Bukhari was a flawless follower of the Prophet and that everything he narrated was absolutely accurate originates from these fabricated dreams. Sadly, these absurdities, which insult the intellect, have been accepted and believed by many.

The myth-making surrounding Al-Bukhari and his *Sahih* has been built upon dreams and visions, which some take as irrefutable proof of his unparalleled status and the unquestionable authenticity of his work. Such narratives, however, should be met with scrutiny and critical thinking rather than blind acceptance.

Certainly, a significant factor in the acceptance of these dreams and visions is the presence of certain hadiths in *Sahih Al-Bukhari* itself, which serve to reinforce control over minds and pave the way for such myths to be believed. Among them is the hadith:

"When the end of time approaches, the believer's dreams will hardly be false. The dream of a believer is one of forty-six parts of prophethood." (Muttafaqun Alayh, Bukhari 2263, narrated by Abu Huraira).

This narration implies that dreams are an indicator of the truthfulness of the dreamer, creating a precedent for treating visions as credible. Further, *Sahih Al-Bukhari* includes other hadiths along the same lines, such as:

"The most truthful among you in dreams is the most truthful among you in speech." (Muttafaqun Alayh, Bukhari 2263, narrated by Abu Huraira).

Moreover, *Sahih Al-Bukhari* seems to suggest that prophethood did not entirely end, as the Qur'an asserts, but that a part of it—the ability to experience visions—remains. This is supported by another hadith attributed to the Prophet:

"Nothing is left of prophethood except glad tidings." They asked, "What are glad tidings?" He replied, "The righteous dream." (Bukhari 6990, narrated by Abu Huraira).

Some voices have attempted to caution against relying on dreams and visions as evidence. For example, the scholar Al-Mu'allimi Al-Yamani, may Allah have mercy on him, stated:

"The scholars agree that dreams cannot serve as evidence; they are merely for encouragement and warning, and may only be used for consultation if they align with sound legal evidence." (*Al-Tankeel*, 2/242).

Despite such warnings, worshippers of personalities continue to present these dreams associated with Muhammad ibn Ismail Al-Bukhari as though they are indisputable historical facts.

However, these dreams are nothing more than exaggerated or fabricated tales manipulated to glorify Al-Bukhari. For those who choose to blindly venerate personalities and traditions, such narratives become untouchable truths. But for those who use reason and critical thinking, these myths are exposed for what they truly are: stories designed to elevate Al-Bukhari's status beyond historical credibility. Who, then, will take heed?

The Legend

The legend of Al-Bukhari began with a series of dreams and visions that marked his biography, turning it into a story based on myth rather than reality. These narratives transformed Al-Bukhari's life into a fantastical tale, more fitting as bedtime stories for children than as serious content for academic study. Yet, this legendary account is taught in institutions and universities as if it were an integral part of our history and the legacy of our scholars.

The fabric of Al-Bukhari's biography is woven from myths fueled by excessive veneration for his persona and the *Sahih* attributed to him. This chapter will provide numerous examples of how the ordinary figure of Sheikh Al-Bukhari was elevated into an extraordinary, mythical character—someone whose existence could only be believable in films or dreams.

Among the indicators of the excessive glorification of Al-Bukhari is the reliance on these myths to sanctify him. As the chapter unfolds, the reader will be astonished by the claims made by individuals presented as scholars, jurists, and hadith experts and by how they have exaggerated Al-Bukhari's character to the point of elevating him beyond human standards.

One example is Dr. Ahmad Omar Hashim, a former president of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, who made a statement during an appearance on the "Ask" program on the Azhari satellite channel. His comments exemplify the lack of logic governing such narratives, as myth and superstition appear to have overtaken reason. Speaking about Al-Bukhari, he said:

"It is inappropriate for anyone attempting to undermine Imam Al-Bukhari to measure him by human standards. Allah has prophets with miracles, saints with divine favors, and His chosen ones. Do you not see that when Al-Bukhari lost his eyesight as a child, his mother wept and prayed to Allah until she saw Prophet Ibrahim, the friend of Allah (peace be upon him), in a dream...?"

This statement reflects the deeply ingrained belief in myths surrounding Al-Bukhari. It is presented not as folklore or exaggeration but as an unquestionable truth used to defend his status and shield him from criticism.

The Myth of Superiority: Logic Replaced by Dreams

Dr. Ahmad Omar Hashim, the former president of Al-Azhar University, invites us to abandon our human reasoning when discussing or critiquing Al-Bukhari. He claims that Al-Bukhari is among Allah's "awliya" (friends) and "chosen ones," implying that the lives of such individuals cannot be subject to human logic, similar to prophets. This assertion raises an important question: What logic, then, should apply to these individuals? What standard can be used to critically analyze their lives and contributions?

Dr. Hashim's argument relies heavily on dream narratives, as illustrated by his statement:
"Do you not see that when Al-Bukhari lost his eyesight as a child, and his mother wept and prayed to Allah, she saw Ibrahim, the friend of Allah (peace be upon him), in a dream, saying, 'O servant of Allah, Allah has restored your son's eyesight.' And indeed, Allah restored his eyesight."

Here, Dr. Hashim suggests that the appropriate "logic" to evaluate Al-Bukhari is the "logic" of dreams and visions—a method that scholars like Al-Mu'allimi have explicitly declared invalid for providing evidence or constructing arguments. Nonetheless, Dr. Hashim defends his glorification of Al-Bukhari by presenting him as someone beyond human measurement, relying on what he calls visions.

What is more troubling is that Dr. Hashim, a scholar specializing in hadith, makes a definitive judgment that Al-Bukhari is one of Allah's friends and chosen ones, treating this as a certainty beyond doubt. However, the nature of such a claim contradicts Islamic principles, as it is impossible for anyone to declare with certainty that a person is among Allah's friends or chosen ones. Only Allah knows the unseen, and no one can claim to know the hearts of others, no matter how well we think of them.

Dr. Hashim's statement directly opposes the Qur'an's guidance in verses such as:
"Do not ascribe purity to yourselves. He knows best who is righteous." [Surah An-Najm, 53:32]

This declaration reflects the dangers of excessive veneration, where personal judgment and unverified narratives are given precedence over divine principles. Such exaggerations do not merely glorify Al-Bukhari—they undermine critical thinking and contradict the Islamic teachings on humility and the limits of human knowledge about the unseen.

Dr. Hashim's defense of Al-Bukhari, founded on dreams and emotional reasoning, exemplifies the troubling reliance on myths to construct an untouchable persona. It dismisses logic, reason, and sound evidence in favor of elevating Al-Bukhari to a status beyond critique. This approach

not only stifles intellectual discourse but also creates a barrier to examining historical figures and their contributions with the critical analysis they deserve.

The Illusion of Divine Endorsement: Exaggeration in the Case of Al-Bukhari

Dr. Ahmad Omar Hashim bases his claim on the fact that Al-Bukhari's exceptional memory and preservation of hadiths were divine gifts intended to safeguard the sayings of the Prophet. He attributes this directly to Allah without providing any credible evidence, stating:

"Allah granted these extraordinary gifts to Al-Bukhari to protect the words of His Messenger."

This kind of assertive language about Allah's will is highly questionable and fraught with assumptions. One must ask: Who informed Dr. Hashim of such divine intentions? How can such a claim, which lacks any verifiable basis, be made with such confidence? The truth is that no evidence supports these assertions beyond the mythologization of Al-Bukhari's persona, turning him into a near-divine figure.

This uncritical veneration reflects a dangerous trend: transforming historical figures into human idols, which goes against Islamic teachings. The Qur'an clearly warns against speaking about Allah without knowledge:

"Say: My Lord has only forbidden indecencies—those that are apparent and those that are hidden—and sin, and wrongful oppression, and associating with Allah that for which He has sent down no authority, and saying about Allah what you do not know." [Surah Al-A'raf, 7:33]

However, such warnings do not deter these scholars from attributing unfounded claims to Allah in their zeal to elevate Al-Bukhari to the highest ranks.

The Case of Adhwaa 'ala Al-Sahihayn

In his book, *Adhwaa 'ala Al-Sahihayn*, Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq Al-Najmi criticizes the excessive praise directed at Al-Bukhari and his *Sahih*. He writes:

"The general scholars have gone to great lengths in their praise and approval of the two Sahihs (Bukhari and Muslim) and in their validation of all their narrations and trustworthiness of their authors. They have overextended their praise to the point of exaggeration and excess. Al-Bukhari, in particular, received more of this excessive praise and glorification than Muslim."

This overpraise leads to absurd practices, as Al-Najmi highlights, where some individuals extend greetings of peace and blessings meant for the Prophet (peace be upon him) to Al-Bukhari himself.

The Danger of Elevating Al-Bukhari Beyond Critique

The claims surrounding Al-Bukhari reflect an underlying issue: the inability or unwillingness to distinguish between respect for a scholar's contributions and blind, mythological reverence. The overreach in attributing divine intent and unparalleled qualities to Al-Bukhari has placed him above human critique, making any discussion of his works or methodologies nearly impossible.

This trend is not only inconsistent with Islamic principles but also undermines the intellectual tradition that encourages reason, evidence, and scrutiny. The glorification of Al-Bukhari, driven by myths and unchecked assumptions, is a reminder of the dangers of elevating historical figures to a status beyond human comprehension and accountability.

The Legend Reinforced by Visions and Fabrications

Some narrators have taken to embedding dreams and visions into the narrative surrounding *Sahih Al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, attributing extraordinary miracles to these works to the point of claiming that the Prophet himself endorsed and approved of their authenticity. Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq Al-Najmi, in *Adhwaa 'ala Al-Sahihayn*, references a story from *Al-Durr Al-Thamin fi Mubashirat Al-Nabi Al-Amin*, which includes the following:

"The Tunisian Sheikh, when visiting the Prophet's grave, asked: 'O Messenger of Allah, is everything in Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim authentic, and may I narrate it as your words?' The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) replied, 'Yes, both are authentic, and you may narrate what is in them as my words.'"

The same source expands on this tale, adding a more elaborate account narrated by Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abd al-Rahman, who recounts his experience with his mentor Sheikh Abd al-Mu'ti Al-Tanousi (Tunisian):

"I was with my mentor, Sheikh Abd al-Mu'ti, during a visit to the Prophet's tomb. I noticed something unusual—he would walk a step, pause briefly, and repeat this until he reached the grave. Standing before the Prophet's tomb, he spoke words I could not comprehend. When we returned, I asked him about his actions. He said, 'I was seeking the Prophet's permission to enter and visit. When I approached, I asked him: "O Messenger of Allah, is everything in Sahih Al-Bukhari authentic?" He replied, "Yes." I then asked, "May I narrate everything in it as your words?" He said, "Yes, narrate from me."

The Danger of Such Myths

These stories are blatantly fabricated and challenge the reader's intellect, faith, and reasoning. Yet, the mindset that refuses to examine matters through human logic leads people to accept such absurdities as undeniable truths. For many, these tales are seen as irrefutable evidence, silencing any opposition or critique of their cherished beliefs.

Blind Faith as a Barrier to Critical Thinking

The problem with accepting these myths lies in the unchecked glorification of figures like Al-Bukhari. By introducing unverifiable dreams and claims of divine approval into the narrative, proponents create an illusion of invincibility around his work. This prevents any meaningful critique or discussion and turns *Sahih Al-Bukhari* into an untouchable relic rather than a human scholarly effort subject to error.

The reliance on such myths exemplifies a disturbing trend: the elevation of human achievements to divine status. This undermines the principles of Islamic scholarship, which should be based on evidence, reason, and critical inquiry, not on fabricated visions or superstitions.

The Exaggeration and Idolization of *Sahih Al-Bukhari*

The claim that the Prophet personally endorsed *Sahih Al-Bukhari* from his grave is emblematic of the uncritical glorification surrounding Al-Bukhari and his work. How can scholars propagate such myths and expect people to accept them without question? Such tales not only insult the intellect but also undermine the foundations of critical thinking and faith.

Reverence Beyond Reason

As Muhammad Fareed Wajdi notes in his *Encyclopedia of the Twentieth Century*:
"Some have gone to the extent of hiring individuals to recite the prophetic narrations from Al-Bukhari's book in hopes of drawing heavenly blessings—exactly as the Qur'an is recited." (*Encyclopedia of the Twentieth Century*, 3:482).

Similarly, Al-Qasimi, in his *Qawa'id al-Tahdith* writes:

"The Sahih Al-Bukhari is equivalent to the Qur'an in its status. If it is recited in a house during an outbreak of plague or epidemic, its inhabitants will be safe from disease. If someone completes it, they will attain their desires. If read during a calamity, one will not leave until it is resolved. And if carried during sea travel, both the bearer and the ship will be saved from sinking."

Comparison to the Qur'an

This exaggerated reverence reaches its zenith in comparisons between Sahih Al-Bukhari and the Qur'an itself. Ibn Hajar al-Makki is quoted in *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*:

"The two Sahihs are the most authentic books after the Qur'an, according to the consensus of those whose opinion matters."

In *Irshad al-Sari*, Al-Qastalani quotes Al-Dhahabi as saying:
"As for Al-Bukhari's Sahih, it is the most revered and best book in Islam after the Book of Allah."

Absurd Legal Opinions

The idolization of Al-Bukhari and his work even extends to legal opinions. Imam Al-Juwayni is quoted in *Siyaanat Sahih Muslim*:
"If someone swore an oath of divorce stating that everything in Al-Bukhari's and Muslim's books is authentic, and if proven otherwise, the divorce would be binding; the divorce would not take effect. This is because the consensus of Muslim scholars affirms the authenticity of these books."

The Consequences of This Idolization

The exaggerated claims surrounding Al-Bukhari and his *Sahih* suggest perfection in both the man and his work. Such perfection implies divine infallibility, an attribute that belongs only to Allah and His revealed Qur'an. Elevating a human and his scholarly work to such a level is not only intellectually dishonest but also theologically problematic.

The narrative that Al-Bukhari is free from error and that his book is beyond reproach has led to the creation of an almost sacred aura around him, turning him into a "complete" figure. But complete perfection is an attribute of the Creator, not the creation. Such blind reverence stifles critical examination, discourages academic scrutiny, and undermines the intellectual legacy of Islamic scholarship.

Instead of venerating Al-Bukhari and his work to this exaggerated degree, we must remember that he was a human being—a scholar who, like all others, is subject to error and fallibility. Only by acknowledging this can we approach his contributions with the respect they deserve while maintaining the critical perspective necessary for a thriving intellectual tradition.

The Myth of Perfection: Al-Bukhari Elevated Beyond Human Limitations

The idea that Al-Bukhari and his *Sahih* represent an unparalleled level of perfection—greater even than that attributed to prophets—is a troubling distortion found in the layers of Islamic religious heritage. This narrative insists that Al-Bukhari is flawless and incapable of error and

that his *Sahih* has achieved a status comparable to the Qur'an. This mythical status, entrenched in religious discourse, prevents critical examination under the threat of consensus or sanctity attributed to dreams and visions.

The "Consensus" Shield

Claims of unanimous agreement (*ijma*) are often used to silence dissent. For instance, Imam Al-Nawawi in *Tahdhib al-Asma wa al-Lughat* (1/73) writes:
"The ummah has unanimously agreed on the authenticity of these two books (Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim) and on the obligation to act upon their hadiths."

Here, not only is the consensus on the authenticity of these works asserted, but the obligation to act upon them is also emphasized. This raises significant questions: Why is such an obligation imposed? What validates Al-Nawawi's claim of consensus? Is it rooted in the legends surrounding Al-Bukhari, or is there more substantial evidence?

Ibn Hajar's Defense of Al-Bukhari's Supremacy

Ibn Hajar, in his introduction to *Fath al-Bari*, provides the following rationale for the unparalleled status of *Sahih Al-Bukhari*:
"There is no doubt in preferring Al-Bukhari, followed by Muslim, over the scholars of their time and those after them in the field of identifying authentic and defective hadiths. For instance, Ali ibn Al-Madini was known to be the most knowledgeable of his peers about hadith defects, and Al-Bukhari learned this from him. Al-Bukhari himself said: 'I never belittled myself before anyone except Ali ibn Al-Madini.' However, even Ali ibn Al-Madini reportedly said about Al-Bukhari: 'Ignore what he says about me, for he has never seen anyone like himself.' Muhammad ibn Yahya Al-Dhuhli, the most knowledgeable of his era about the defects in Al-Zuhri's narrations, also influenced both Al-Bukhari and Muslim."

The Claim of Divine Guidance

Ibn Hajar further quotes Al-Bukhari as saying:
"I never included a hadith in my Sahih without first praying to Allah and ensuring its authenticity."

This statement reinforces the perception of divine involvement in the compilation of *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, further shielding it from critique.

The Problem with Mythologizing Al-Bukhari

By claiming that *Sahih Al-Bukhari* is "perfect," adherents assert that it is free from human flaws such as oversight, misunderstanding, or error. Such perfection, however, is an attribute reserved solely for Allah and His revelation, the Qur'an. The exaltation of Al-Bukhari to this level creates

a problematic parallel with the Qur'an itself, as seen in statements comparing *Sahih Al-Bukhari* to the divine book.

These claims go beyond scholarly respect and enter the realm of idolatry, where human works and their authors are placed beyond the reach of reason, critique, or accountability. This attitude not only contradicts Islamic principles that encourage critical inquiry but also perpetuates myths that harm the intellectual and spiritual integrity of the tradition.

A Call for Balance and Reason

Al-Bukhari was undoubtedly a significant scholar, and his *Sahih* remains a monumental work in the Islamic tradition. However, to preserve the integrity of both scholarship and faith, it is crucial to recognize his humanity, subject his work to critical analysis, and avoid blind glorification. Only then can we engage with his contributions in a way that honors his efforts while staying true to the principles of Islam.

The Reverence for Al-Bukhari: Between Critique and Blind Admiration

Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani's defense of Al-Bukhari and his *Sahih* in the introduction to *Hady al-Sari* reflects the entrenched reverence surrounding Al-Bukhari. Despite criticisms and doubts about certain narrations in *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Ibn Hajar asserts the superiority of Al-Bukhari's methodology, relying on the latter's claim that he prayed and sought divine guidance before including any hadith in his collection. Ibn Hajar also cites the statement attributed to Ali ibn Al-Madini, Al-Bukhari's teacher:

"Ignore what he says about me, for he has never seen anyone like himself."

While Ibn Hajar frames this as praise, a closer examination reveals a subtle critique. Ali ibn Al-Madini's remark could suggest that Al-Bukhari had an inflated perception of his own abilities. This highlights an inherent tension in the narrative: is it pure admiration, or does it contain an undercurrent of skepticism?

The Mythical Status of Al-Bukhari

The elevation of Al-Bukhari beyond human limitations has led to a recurring refrain: *"Al-Bukhari cannot be judged by human standards."* This idea places him above prophets and messengers, who were themselves subject to human trials and errors. The narrative surrounding Al-Bukhari is less about historical accuracy and more about creating a mythos that defies logic and reason.

Ibn Hajar's Collection of Praises

In *Hady al-Sari*, Ibn Hajar compiles numerous accolades for Al-Bukhari and his *Sahih*:

1. **Sulaiman ibn Harb** once remarked upon seeing Al-Bukhari:
   "This one will rise to prominence."

2. **Ahmad ibn Hafs** made a similar prediction.

3. Al-Bukhari himself recalled:

   "Whenever I visited Sulaiman ibn Harb, he would say, 'Clarify for us the mistakes of Shu'bah.'"

4. **Muhammad ibn Abi Hatim** narrated Al-Bukhari's claim:
   "Whenever I selected hadiths from the works of Isma'il ibn Abi Uwais, I would transcribe only those I considered authentic."

These testimonials elevate Al-Bukhari and his work to unparalleled heights, portraying him as a towering figure immune to error or critique.

The Consequences of Overreverence

This excessive veneration turns Al-Bukhari and his *Sahih* into a sacred relic, immune to human scrutiny. It stifles intellectual discourse and prevents any meaningful evaluation of his methodology or conclusions. By declaring his work infallible, adherents create an untouchable "mythical fortress" around his persona and contributions.

While Al-Bukhari was undoubtedly a pioneering scholar in hadith studies, treating his work as flawless or divinely inspired undermines the very principles of Islamic scholarship, which prioritize evidence, logic, and accountability.

A Balanced Perspective

Acknowledging Al-Bukhari's significant contributions to Islamic tradition does not necessitate blind admiration or mythologization. He was a human being, subject to error and limitations like all scholars. A balanced approach allows us to respect his efforts while critically engaging with his work to uphold the intellectual rigor of Islamic thought.

The Glorification of Al-Bukhari: Personal Accounts and Recognition

The discussions surrounding Al-Bukhari's expertise, knowledge, and revered status in the world of hadith literature are deeply intertwined with personal accounts and interactions from his contemporaries. Various figures from the hadith and scholarly traditions of Islam shared their views on his intellectual capabilities, elevating him to an extraordinary status.

Al-Bukhari's Unique Methodology and Influence

Al-Bukhari himself acknowledged his careful selection of hadiths for his *Sahih*, indicating a meticulous approach where he would not include any narration without first praying and seeking guidance from God. His method of choosing hadiths was based on a rigorous process of ensuring their authenticity and reliability. For instance, when speaking about his approach to verifying hadiths, he would consult with prominent figures like Isma'il ibn Abi Uwais and others to deepen his understanding and discern the authenticity of each narration.

Contemporary Praise

1. **Ibn Abi Uwais' Respect for Al-Bukhari**:
   Muhammad ibn Isma'il Al-Bukhari, renowned for his precision in the art of hadith compilation, was regarded as a towering figure by those around him. His teacher, Ibn Abi Uwais, had immense respect for his abilities, even advising him to review and expand upon his own works to ensure completeness.

2. **Recognition by Qutayba ibn Sa'id**:
   Qutayba ibn Sa'id, a famous scholar, was also deeply impressed by Al-Bukhari's knowledge. He famously remarked that if Al-Bukhari had lived during the time of the Companions, he would have been a miracle (an ayah). Qutayba also compared him to the giants of hadith, such as Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Isma'il ibn Abi Uwais, acknowledging his standing among the scholars of his time.

3. **Muhammad ibn Qutayba's Admiration**:
   Muhammad ibn Qutayba, another significant scholar, recalled how, when he was in the company of Abu 'Amr al-Karmani, Qutayba praised Al-Bukhari's intellectual prowess by stating that he had never encountered anyone as insightful as Al-Bukhari. He even likened him to an individual who would have been an unparalleled figure if he had lived in the time of the Companions of the Prophet.

4. **Ibn Qutayba's Reflection on Al-Bukhari's Knowledge**:
   Ibn Qutayba elaborated further by noting that in terms of hadith scholarship, Al-Bukhari had no equal. His admiration was not only for Al-Bukhari's expertise but also for his profound knowledge of jurisprudence and his ability to teach others. When asked about divorce for the intoxicated, Qutayba pointed to Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Isma'il ibn Abi Uwais as the main authorities on the subject while also highlighting the extensive reach of Al-Bukhari's expertise.

5. **Abu 'Amr al-Karmani's Perspective**:
   Abu 'Amr al-Karmani shared with the famous scholar Mihyar how Qutayba had mentioned that scholars had traveled from the farthest reaches of the world to study with Al-Bukhari, underlining his unparalleled reputation and influence in the realm of hadith.

Al-Bukhari's Unmatched Status

These accounts from the scholars of his time show how Al-Bukhari was not merely seen as a hadith compiler but as a scholar whose contributions went far beyond the realm of religious texts. His methods, rigor, and divine guidance were deeply revered, making his work almost sacred in the eyes of his contemporaries. This reverence, however, led to his elevation to a mythical status that still persists today, where his judgments and selections are considered unquestionable, and his methodology is seen as flawless.

The Tension Between Reverence and Critique

While these praises and stories highlight Al-Bukhari's immense contribution to Islamic scholarship, they also point to the danger of idealizing any scholar to the point where their work becomes immune to critique. The narrative of Al-Bukhari as an infallible figure detracts from the importance of scholarly rigor and healthy intellectual discourse, which are the true hallmarks of academic traditions. The reverence surrounding him, despite its positive intentions, can stifle questioning and critical evaluation, which are vital for the continued growth of Islamic thought.

Thus, the question remains: can a balance be struck between acknowledging the monumental contributions of Al-Bukhari and recognizing the need for critical engagement with his work? In Islamic scholarship, the need for both reverence and critique must coexist to ensure intellectual integrity.

Further Praise and Accounts of Al-Bukhari's Eminence in Hadith and Jurisprudence

The deep respect and reverence for Muhammad ibn Isma'il Al-Bukhari are clearly reflected in the accounts and interactions of the scholars of his time. The admiration for his knowledge and expertise extended beyond his own circle to include other famous scholars, who not only recognized his superior intellectual capabilities but also praised his precision and accuracy in both hadith and fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence).

Recognition from Scholars and Peers

1. **Mihyar's Testimony**:
   Mihyar, a respected scholar, confirmed Qutayba's statement, emphasizing that he had seen Yahya ibn Ma'in (a renowned scholar of hadith) in humble submission to Al-Bukhari's vast knowledge. Yahya ibn Ma'in—a contemporary who had exceptional knowledge of the science of hadith—was known to look up to Al-Bukhari in the domain of hadith criticism and knowledge.

2. **Notable Hadith Scholars' Acknowledgments**:
   Scholars like Said ibn Abi Maryam, Hajjaj ibn Minhal, Isma'il ibn Abi Uwais, Humiidi, Nu'aym ibn Hammad, and Muhammad ibn Yahya ibn Abi 'Amr are some of the significant figures who recognized Al-Bukhari's expertise in hadith. They held him in high esteem, attributing to him unparalleled proficiency in discerning the authenticity and understanding of hadith.

3. **Al-Bukhari's Recognition in His Time**:
   In one of the notable testimonies, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, the great scholar and imam of the Hanbali school, remarked that nothing from Khurasan (the region that included Transoxiana, where Bukhara was located) had been produced like Muhammad ibn Isma'il. The recognition of his intellectual prowess extended to a wide range of scholars, including Ya'qub ibn Ibrahim al-Dawriqi, Nu'aym ibn Hammad al-Khuzai, and Bendar, who stated that Al-Bukhari was the most knowledgeable faqih (jurist) of his time.

4. **Famous Mentions of Al-Bukhari**:
   Many of his contemporaries shared their personal experiences and praised Al-Bukhari. For example, Muhammad ibn Abu Hatim once commented that he had heard Hashim ibn Isma'il say that Al-Bukhari was regarded as the chief of the fuqaha (jurisprudents), and many other scholars considered him the preeminent scholar in hadith and jurisprudence.

5. **Bendar's Praise**:
   Bendar once asserted that Al-Bukhari was the most faqih (jurisprudent) and knowledgeable scholar of his time. His opinion was held in the highest regard, even among scholars as distinguished as Ahmad ibn Hanbal, who further corroborated the reverence for Al-Bukhari's scholarship in hadith.

Stories of Al-Bukhari's Influence

1. **The Incident with Ibn Abu Yusuf**:
   An interesting account involves Abdullah ibn Yusuf al-Tanimi (known for his works on hadith), who asked Al-Bukhari to review his books. Al-Bukhari affirmed his assistance and remarked that he was happy to guide others in their knowledge. This interaction shows Al-Bukhari's willingness to share his insight and his role as a mentor to other scholars.

2. **Al-Bukhari's Early Years and Mentorship**:
   Al-Bukhari's devotion to study and scholarly rigor began at a very young age. When he was only eighteen, he had already gained recognition for his brilliance in understanding hadith. One account recalls that he visited al-Humaydi (a prominent hadith scholar) when he was still young, and the disagreements between them in understanding certain narrations were resolved, with Al-Bukhari emerging victorious in his scholarly arguments, solidifying his reputation among his peers.

3. **Al-Bukhari and His Teachers**:
   Al-Bukhari's influence was not limited to his contemporaries; he also benefited immensely from the guidance of prominent scholars like al-Humaydi. A particularly famous story mentions that when Al-Bukhari first arrived in Makkah, he found al-Humaydi—a leading scholar of hadith—discussing various issues of hadith. The scholars were unsure of the authenticity of some narrations, and it was Al-Bukhari who provided the correct interpretation, earning the admiration of al-Humay**di**.

4. **The "Sahih" as a Unique Contribution**:
   One of the most famous incidents in Al-Bukhari's life occurred when he sought permission from al-Humaydi to compile a book of authentic hadiths. After completing the Sahih, Al-Bukhari presented it to al-Humaydi, who immediately recognized its significance. In another account, al-Humaydi was said to have commented on Al-Bukhari's incredible attention to detail, as he only accepted narrations that met the highest standards of authenticity.

5. **Al-Bukhari's Journey to Mecca and Medina**:
   Al-Bukhari's travels to places like Mecca, Medina, and Basra were not just for pilgrimage but to learn from and engage with the most outstanding scholars of his time. These travels played a key role in his intellectual development, ensuring that his work was informed by the best sources of knowledge.

The Esteemed Position of Al-Bukhari

Despite the immense respect and praise directed towards him, Al-Bukhari's methodology and rigor were not beyond the realm of critique. His work, Sahih al-Bukhari**,** though highly regarded, continues to be a source of scholarly debate, ensuring his place not only as a revered figure but also as one who invites continued scholarly discussion and inquiry.

Continued Praise and Reverence for Al-Bukhari's Knowledge and Status

The admiration and reverence for Muhammad ibn Isma'il Al-Bukhari among scholars is further illustrated in the numerous accounts of his interactions with other prominent figures of his time. These stories highlight his unmatched expertise, his critical role in the science of hadith**,** and his respected position among his peers.

Al-Bukhari's Influence on His Peers

1. **The Impression on Muhammad ibn Salam**: Muhammad ibn Salam, a renowned scholar, admitted that whenever Al-Bukhari entered his presence, he was overwhelmed and even felt uneasy, as he feared making a mistake in front of him due to Al-Bukhari's exceptional knowledge. This reaction underscores the profound respect that scholars had for Al-Bukhari, acknowledging his intellectual dominance in hadith and fiqh.

2. **Al-Bukhari's Deep Knowledge and Precision**: Suleiman ibn Mujahid recalled being with Muhammad ibn Salam, who mentioned that if Al-Bukhari had arrived earlier, he would have seen a young man who had memorized seventy thousand hadiths. This points to the extraordinary memory and comprehension that Al-Bukhari displayed from a young age, setting him apart from his contemporaries.

3. **Ishaq ibn Rahwayh's Acknowledgment**: In a notable instance, Ishaq ibn Rahwayh, another towering figure in hadith scholarship, was seen sitting on the pulpit delivering a narration when Al-Bukhari objected to a particular hadith. Ishaq acknowledged his mistake and told the audience, "Listen to this young man and write down his words, for he is truly knowledgeable." This moment clearly shows Al-Bukhari's reputation as a scholar of extraordinary precision and authority.

4. **The Influence of Al-Bukhari on His Teachers**: Al-Bukhari's influence was not just limited to his peers but extended to his teachers as well. Ishaq ibn Rahwayh, after hearing Al-Bukhari correct a hadith, admitted that he had learned from him. Al-Bukhari's deep understanding of hadith and fiqh made him a reference point even for established scholars.

5. **The Recognition from Ali ibn al-Madini**: Ali ibn al-Madini, one of the leading scholars in the science of hadith, regarded Al-Bukhari with great esteem. Al-Bukhari shared that he never felt smaller in the presence of any scholar except Ali ibn al-Madini, illustrating the deep respect he held for his teacher. In fact, Al-Bukhari felt that Ali ibn al-Madini's knowledge was unsurpassed in certain areas, highlighting the humility that Al-Bukhari maintained despite his immense learning.

6. **Al-Bukhari's Commanding Presence**: Ahmad ibn Sulaiman narrated that whenever Al-Bukhari was present among scholars, he commanded such awe and reverence that even when Al-Bukhari spoke, everyone would listen attentively. The mere presence of Al-Bukhari was enough to establish the correctness of a narration or argument; such was the confidence others had in his judgment.

Al-Bukhari's Impact Beyond His Time

1. **Ibn Hajar's Praise of Al-Bukhari**: Even centuries after Al-Bukhari's death, scholars like Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani continued to laud his contributions to the science of hadith. Ibn Hajar stated that Al-Bukhari was unparalleled in his collection of authentic hadiths, and his Sahih continues to be regarded as the most authoritative collection of hadith in the Sunni tradition.

2. **Al-Bukhari's Legacy in Hadith Literature**: Al-Bukhari's influence has transcended generations. His methodology in hadith criticism, his rigorous standards for authenticity, and his insistence on collecting only the most reliable narrations set a precedent for later scholars. The legacy of Sahih al-Bukhari continues to influence the way Islamic scholars engage with hadith literature.

The stories and testimonies from various scholars across different periods reinforce Al-Bukhari's status as the most authoritative figure in the realm of hadith. His commitment to the science of hadith, his deep understanding of fiqh, and his ability to critique and correct even the most prominent scholars of his time earned him the title of Imam al-Hadith. Even those who disagreed with him respected his scholarship, and his contributions to Islamic knowledge continue to be a benchmark for scholars in the field of hadith.

Continued Praise and Reverence for Al-Bukhari

The remarkable reverence and high regard for Al-Bukhari continued to be expressed by his contemporaries and later scholars. Below are more accounts reflecting his unparalleled contribution to the preservation and understanding of hadith, and his esteemed status among Islamic scholars:

1. **Al-Bukhari's Reverence Among His Peers**: When Amr ibn Ali al-Fallas (a respected scholar of hadith) was informed that Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari had not recognized a particular hadith, he responded with astonishment. He said, "A hadith that Al-Bukhari doesn't recognize? This is impossible!" This reaction underlined the trust and high regard that scholars had for Al-Bukhari's judgment and knowledge.

2. **Praise from Abu 'Amr al-Karmani**: Abu 'Amr al-Karmani, a prominent scholar, recalled that Amr ibn Ali al-Fallas referred to Al-Bukhari as a figure of unparalleled knowledge, saying, "There is no one in Khorasan like him." This expression reflects the unmatched status Al-Bukhari had in the world of hadith scholarship.

3. **Rajaa ibn Rajaa's Admiration**: Rajaa ibn Rajaa al-Hafiz described Al-Bukhari's superiority in knowledge as being comparable to the superiority of men over women. He said, "The superiority of Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari over other scholars is like the superiority of men over women." He further emphasized, "He is a sign of God's power, walking on the earth." This indicates the almost divine reverence with which Al-Bukhari was regarded.

4. **Al-Husayn ibn Harith's Testimony**: Al-Husayn ibn Harith expressed his awe at Al-Bukhari by stating that he could not think of any scholar like him, describing him as if he were created solely for the purpose of preserving hadith. This reflects the exceptional nature of Al-Bukhari's mission and scholarship.

5. **Ahmed ibn al-Dhahbi's Affection**: Ahmed ibn al-Dhahbi recalled a conversation in which Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shayba and Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Numayr both stated that they had never encountered anyone like Al-Bukhari. They both recognized him as an unparalleled scholar of hadith. Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shayba even referred to him as "Al-Bazil" (the complete or perfect one), indicating his extraordinary proficiency and completeness in the field of hadith.

6. **Al-Bukhari's Distinction in the Eyes of His Students**: Abu 'Isa al-Tirmidhi reported an interaction between Al-Bukhari and Abdullah ibn Munir, who praised Al-Bukhari saying, "May Allah make you the adornment of this Ummah." Al-Tirmidhi emphasized that Al-Bukhari's scholarship was indeed a significant blessing for the Muslim community.

7. **Al-Bukhari's Lifelong Influence**: Abu Abdullah al-Farbari recounted hearing Abdullah ibn Munir speak about his time studying under Al-Bukhari**,** saying, "I am one of his students." Abdullah ibn Munir also commented that he had never seen anyone like Al-Bukhari**,** indicating the profound impact Al-Bukhari had on those who learned from him.

8. **Yahya ibn Ja'far's Deep Respect**: Yahya ibn Ja'far al-Baykandi expressed such admiration for Al-Bukhari that he wished he could trade his life to extend the life of Al-Bukhari**.** He stated that the death of Al-Bukhari marked a loss of knowledge, which underscored the depth of Al-Bukhari's influence on the transmission of hadith**.** He even remarked that "Had it not been for you, I would not have been able to live peacefully in Bukhara**."**

9. **Al-Bukhari's Authority in Hadith**: Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Mas'udi emphasized that **Al-Bukhari** was considered an imam in hadith**.** He stated, "If someone does not regard him as an imam, then they are suspect." This reflected the absolute authority that Al-Bukhari held among his peers and followers in the science of hadith.

10. **The Three Great Scholars of the Time**: Ali ibn al-Hajjaj mentioned that the top scholars of his time were three Al-Bukhari**,** Ali ibn al-Hajar and Ibrahim al-Sarmi. He considered Al-Bukhari the most knowledgeable person in the field of hadith and acknowledged that there was no one like him in terms of depth of understanding.

11. **Ahmed ibn Ishaq's Testimony**: Ahmed ibn Ishaq described Al-Bukhari as the ultimate authority for those seeking true understanding in fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence). He suggested that those who wanted to understand fiqh and hadith correctly should turn to Al-Bukhari, reflecting his unmatched stature in the scholarly community.

These continued testimonies further illustrate the extraordinary influence Al-Bukhari had on the field of hadith scholarship. His legacy, both as a scholar and a teacher, was foundational to the Islamic scholarly tradition, and his contributions remain pivotal in the preservation and interpretation of the Sunnah**.** Al-Bukhari**'**s work continues to be a touchstone for authenticity in the study of hadith to this very day.

Continued Testimonies and Praise of Al-Bukhari

The reverence and admiration for Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari continued to be expressed by his peers and later scholars, further solidifying his standing as one of the greatest scholars in Islamic history, especially in the field of hadith.

1. **Praise for Al-Bukhari's Knowledge**: There was a notable instance when Ishaq ibn Rahuyah and Amr ibn Zararah were at a gathering where Al-Bukhari was present, and both acknowledged that Al-Bukhari was more knowledgeable and insightful than they were. This testimony was an indication of Al-Bukhari's unparalleled expertise in hadith. His peers regarded him as the most knowledgeable of all, even when they were still at the height of their own scholarly careers.

2. **Al-Bukhari's Excellence Over His Contemporaries**: Abu Bakr al-Isma'ili recalls that Al-Bukhari was so respected that when he and others attended a gathering led by Ishaq ibn Rahuyah, Ishaq himself acknowledged that Al-Bukhari had a sharper insight and greater understanding of hadith than him, even though Ishaq was an esteemed scholar in his own right.

3. **Testimony from Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Farhani**: Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Farhani narrates an event when Al-Bukhari was mentioned in a gathering, and someone expressed their inability to compare with him in terms of knowledge. The response was swift, with the leader of the gathering, Ibn Ash-Shakkab, leaving the meeting in anger at the mere mention of someone questioning Al-Bukhari's knowledge.

4. **Al-Bukhari’s Influence Among His Peers**: Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Said ibn Ja'far recounted the time when Al-Bukhari and Ishaq ibn Rahuyah were both seen escorting the funeral of Ahmad ibn Harb. In that moment, people from different scholarly circles remarked that Al-Bukhari was more knowledgeable than Ishaq, highlighting Al-Bukhari's revered position among the scholars of the time.

5. **Abu Hatim al-Razi’s Testimony**: Abu Hatim al-Razi, a famous scholar, emphasized that Al-Bukhari was the most precise and knowledgeable scholar in Khorasan. He also expressed that no scholar from Khorasan had ever matched Al-Bukhari's understanding of hadith, nor had any other scholar ever surpassed him in knowledge.

6. **Imam al-Dhahabi's Praise**: Imam al-Dhahabi, a renowned historian and scholar, attested that there was no one who had the same depth of understanding and insight as Al-Bukhari in his time. His contributions in preserving and compiling the Sahih made him a towering figure whose intellectual brilliance was acknowledged across the Islamic world.

7. **Al-Bukhari's Scholarly Reputation**: Abu 'Isa al-Tirmidhi also acknowledged that when Al-Bukhari would engage in discussions about hadith, his insights were unmatched. Even

Ibn Munir said that Al-Bukhari was the “ornament of this nation,” a title that reinforced his revered status in the intellectual community.

8. **Al-Bukhari’s Record in Collecting and Preserving Hadith**: Several scholars emphasized Al-Bukhari's mastery in preserving the Sunnah. Al-Darimi reported that he had traveled to various scholarly centers in the Hijaz, Sham, and Iraq, and observed that none of the scholars he met matched Al-Bukhari in his ability to preserve the authenticity of the hadith.

9. **Testimony of Al-Darimi**: Al-Darimi reported an interaction in which Al-Bukhari corrected him when it came to evaluating the authenticity of a particular hadith. He described Al-Bukhari as having a unique sharpness of mind, being the wisest of creation when it came to understanding the teachings of Islam.

10. **A Visionary in Islamic Knowledge**: Hatem ibn Mansur spoke highly of Al-Bukhari, describing him as a "sign from the signs of God," in terms of both his depth of insight and his precision in understanding the science of hadith. His ability to discern authentic hadith was likened to divine insight.

These testimonies continue to highlight Al-Bukhari's unparalleled contribution to hadith scholarship. His peers and later generations of scholars recognized his profound impact on the preservation of Islamic traditions, and his works continue to serve as the benchmark for authenticity in the study of Sunnah.

Continued Testimonies and Praise of Al-Bukhari

1. Abu Sahl Mahmoud bin al-Nadr, the jurist, said:

   "I entered Basra, Sham, the Hijaz, and Kufa, and I saw their scholars. Whenever the name of Muhammad bin Ismail was mentioned, they preferred him over themselves."

2. Abu Sahl also said: "I heard more than thirty scholars from the scholars of Egypt say:

   "Our need in this world is to look at Muhammad bin Ismail."

3. Saalih bin Muhammad Jazrah said:

   "I did not see anyone from Khurasan more knowledgeable than Muhammad bin Ismail."

4. He also said:

   "He was the most knowledgeable of them regarding hadith."

5. He continued:

   "I used to write down for him in Baghdad, and the number of people attending the assembly reached twenty thousand."

6. The hadith scholar Abu al-Abbas al-Fadl bin al-Abbas, known for his excellence in knowledge, was asked:

   "Who is more knowledgeable, Muhammad bin Ismail or Abu Zur'ah?" He replied: "I never met Muhammad bin Ismail. He met me between Halwan and Baghdad, and I returned with him for a stage, exerting all my effort to bring a hadith he did not know, but I was unable to."

7. Muhammad bin Abdul Rahman al-Dughuli wrote to the people of Baghdad:

   "*Muhammad bin Ismail al-Bukhari is the best of them. As long as they remain, there is no greater good for them, and there is no good after you when you are missed.*"

8. Imam of the Imams, Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Ishaq bin Khuzaymah said:

   "There is no one under the sky more knowledgeable of hadith than Muhammad bin Ismail."

9. Abu Isa al-Tirmidhi said:

   "I have not seen anyone more knowledgeable of hadith criticism and chains of narrations than Muhammad bin Ismail al-Bukhari."

10. Muslim also testified:

    "There is no one like you in this world."

11. Ahmad bin Siyyar in the history of Mar said:

    "Muhammad bin Ismail al-Bukhari sought knowledge, met people, traveled for hadith, became an expert in it, and had excellent understanding, preservation, and jurisprudence."

12. Abu Ahmad bin 'Adi said:

    "Yahya bin Muhammad bin S'aad, whenever he mentioned al-Bukhari, would say: 'That is the expert scholar who is unmatched."

13. Abu Amr al-Khafaf narrated:

    "He was the purest and most knowledgeable person in hadith. I have not seen anyone like Muhammad bin Ismail."

14. He added:

    "He was more knowledgeable of hadith than Ahmad and Ishaq bin Rahawayh and others by twenty degrees."

15. If anyone spoke ill of him, I would curse them a thousand times.

16. He said:

    "If anyone entered through this door and I were talking about him, I would be filled with terror."

17. Abdullah bin Hammad al-Obali said:

    "I wish I were a hair on the body of Muhammad bin Ismail."

18. Sulaim bin Mujahid said:

    "I have not seen anyone more knowledgeable or pious than Muhammad bin Ismail for the last sixty years."

19. Musa bin Harun al-Hammal, the hadith scholar, said:

    "I have not seen anyone like Muhammad bin Ismail."

If the people of Islam had gathered to find another like Muhammad bin Ismail in knowledge, they would not have been able to find anyone like him.

Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Sa'id bin Ja'far said: "I heard the scholars of Egypt say that there is no one in the world like Muhammad bin Ismail in knowledge and precision."

Abdullah added: "I agree with their statement."

The scholar Abu al-Abbas Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Sa'id bin 'Aqdah said: "If a man were to write thirty thousand hadiths, he would still not be able to dispense with the history of Muhammad bin Ismail."

The historian Abu Ahmad al-Kuna said: "One of the imams in the knowledge and collection of hadith if I were to say that I have never seen the classification of anyone comparable to his in precision and exaggeration, I would have done so. And if I opened the door to praise the imams who came after him, it would be an endless sea. Thus, I have mentioned the words of Ibn 'Aqdah and Abu Ahmad as an introduction to this."

After the previous praise from his major teachers, there is no need to recount the praise from those who came after him. Those early scholars praised him for what they witnessed and described what they knew, while later scholars based their praise on what had been transmitted to them. There is a clear difference between these two positions, and the issue is not as simple as the news says.

This excerpt comes from the introduction of *Fath al-Bari* by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani on pages 482 to 485 of the first volume.

The long quote from the introduction of *Fath al-Bari* was included here to show the immense respect and recognition that Bukhari received from his teachers so that readers understand the magnitude of their admiration for him. This is not just an arbitrary statement; it is important to stress that such praise is not without foundation.

Unfortunately, this type of extreme praise is what is currently studied in Islamic universities across the Muslim world, but it often becomes a part of our history without critical examination.

I am confident that if Bukhari had lived in our time and read the excessive amount of exaggerated praise about him, he would have turned to God for forgiveness.

Fath al-Bari alone is filled with such exaggerated praise, but many other books have followed the same approach in elevating this man and raising the status of Sahih al-Bukhari.

He elevated it to the level of veneration, and I will conclude this section by quoting from *Al-Bidaya wa'l-Nihaya* by Ibn Kathir, which follows the same direction and reinforces it.

He set his own conditions in his "Sahih" that are more stringent than those of any book compiled in the "Sahih" category, and nothing compares to it, not even "Sahih Muslim" or any other. What he says is well expressed by some of the scholars in their poetry:

"Sahih al-Bukhari, if they were to describe it, it would only be written in gold.
It is the difference between guidance and blindness, the barrier between youth and destruction.
Its chains of transmission are like the stars of the sky,
While its texts are like meteors.
Through it stands the balance of the religion of the Messenger,
And by it, the non-Arabs followed the Arabs.
It is a veil of fire, without doubt,
Distinguishing between pleasure and wrath.
It is a fine covering leading to the Chosen One,
A clear explication that removes doubt.
O scholar, upon whom the world agrees for the excellence of his rank.
You surpassed the imams in what you gathered,
And triumphed in their view through your patience.
You removed the weak from the narrators,
And those who were accused of lying.
You excelled in the excellent arrangement and classification of the hadith,
A marvel beyond marvels.
So your Lord gave you what you desired,
And blessed you with the greatest of gifts."

After such a fawning statement, what remains of the book of Allah in terms of veneration?

The Legend of Exotrondery Memory

In the legendary trajectory and context of the biography of Imam al-Bukhari, which is surrounded by myths, we find that the narrators, in order to complete these legendary chains, also added to it the myth of memory or the legendary memorization. In fact, one of them wrote an article in the Algerian magazine *Al-Arabi* titled: "Al-Bukhari, the World Champion in Memory," emphasizing his superiority over the most important global figures of his time and in all times, particularly in terms of memorization and recall. He even claimed that his memory was faster than that of the giant computers. Here, we will present some aspects of al-Bukhari's legendary memory as passed down to us through the books of heritage.

The narration about his legendary memory appears in *Al-Bidaya wa'l-Nihaya* by Ibn Kathir, where it is stated:

"Al-Bukhari—may Allah have mercy on him—was born on the night of Friday, the 13th of Shawwal in the year 194 AH. His father passed away while he was still young, and he was raised by his mother. Allah inspired him to memorize hadith while he was in school (maktab), and he read famous books. By the age of sixteen, he had memorized seventy thousand hadith, including their chains of transmission and the status of each narrator, whether they were trustworthy or not, and the authenticity or weakness of each hadith. His memorization was so extensive that when he was only 18 years old, he went to Mecca to seek hadith. He later traveled to other regions, seeking the knowledge of hadith from the scholars in the countries he could reach. He wrote from more than a thousand scholars and narrated from them, and countless people narrated from him."

Now, imagine the massive number of hadiths—*seventy thousand*—that al-Bukhari had memorized, with their full chains of narrators, their names, and every detail about the narrators' reliability or shortcomings. The fact that he had such vast and detailed knowledge at such a young age is truly extraordinary. He would have had to memorize the narrators and their contexts, classifying each hadith as authentic, weak, or somewhere in between, as well as the specifics of each transmission.

If we take into account all of his early life—his learning of the Arabic language and its sciences, his studies of jurisprudence and its sciences, his memorization of hadith and its sciences, his childhood, his early stages of learning to crawl, walk, and talk, and still, we are left to wonder: How could someone so young have mastered such an immense body of knowledge and dedicated his life to preserving it?

By this, we should consider that Bukhari was essentially born with the ability to memorize hadiths, even before he was born as if he had been destined to preserve the narrations of the Prophet Muhammad from the very beginning of his existence.

The Myth of Legendary Memorization

Despite not considering the years spent playing with other children, it remains that the legend of al-Bukhari's memory will always remain a myth, just like other myths passed down to us through the writings of scholars. These myths are filled with "historical" nonsense that aims to create a mythical persona immune to criticism or challenge. As a result, these tales ascribe to him things that defy logic and reason.

It was mentioned about him in *Kitab Ma'arifat Anwa' Ilm al-Hadith* by Ibn al-Salah (Edition by Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Vol. 1, p. 37) that "he memorized 100,000 authentic hadiths, and 200,000 weak hadiths." In another book titled *Al-Imam al-Bukhari wa Kitabuhu al-Jami' al-Sahih* by Abd al-Muhsin ibn Hamad ibn Abd al-Muhsin ibn Abd Allah ibn Hamad al-Badr (Edition by the Islamic University of Madinah, Vol. 1, p. 33), it is stated that he "would take the book of knowledge, glance at it, and memorize most of the narrations after a single read."

Thus, it is only natural that this supposed result—of a child in his playing years memorizing seventy thousand hadiths—would eventually lead to him being credited with memorizing 300,000 hadiths as a young man in his prime. And to further obscure the reality, to hide the time it must have taken him to memorize these 300,000 hadiths, another version of the story was concocted: that al-Bukhari would memorize a book simply by glancing at it. It is said that he would simply skim the pages, and the entire content would be engraved in his "iron"—or, more accurately, "legendary"—memory. By doing this, he supposedly completed and memorized the entire book with all its complexities, fixed permanently in the "solid" structure of his mind.

Furthermore, narrators have stated that al-Bukhari used to correct his teachers' mistakes in hadiths. But one must ask, what were those teachers teaching him if he was already correcting them? And how was it that they would submit to his corrections when there was a difference of opinion? This is indeed a strange matter! Such claims were recorded in *Tarikh Baghdad* by Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Thabit ibn Ahmad ibn Mahdi).

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It was reported that al-Bukhari's teachers acknowledged his memorization abilities from a young age, and they would take from him and benefit from him. Muhammad ibn Abi Hatim said: "I heard Muhammad ibn Ismail say: 'Look into my books, and if you find something with my handwriting crossed out, do not narrate it.'"

This narrative also appears in the *Bidaya wa'l-Nihaya* by Ibn Kathir (Abu al-Fida Ismail ibn Umar ibn Kathir al-Qurashi al-Dimashqi) in volume 14, p. 531: "Muhammad ibn Yahya al-Dhuhli, one of his prominent teachers, used to ask him about the names, kunyas, and flaws (in narrations), and Bukhari would pass through them as quickly as an arrow, as if he were reciting 'Say: He is Allah, [Who is] One.'"

Additionally, it was mentioned in the book *Irshad al-Sari* for explaining *Sahih al-Bukhari* by al-Qastallani (Abu al-Abbas Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr ibn Abd al-Malik al-Qastallani al-Qutaybi) (Edition by Al-Matba'a al-Kubra al-Amiriyya, Egypt, Vol. 1, p. 34) that: "He was granted strong memorization abilities from a young age. While still a boy, he could memorize seventy thousand hadiths and knew the history and biographies of their narrators. Suleiman ibn Mujahid said: 'I was with Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari when he said to me: 'If you had come earlier, you would have seen a young boy who had memorized seventy thousand hadiths.' I went in search of him and met him, and asked: 'Are you the one who claims to have memorized seventy thousand hadiths?' He replied: 'Yes, and more. I never narrate a hadith from the companions or the followers except that I know the year of their birth, death, and where they lived. I never narrate any hadith from the companions or the followers unless I have it memorized and can trace it back to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).'"

The narrators went to great lengths to emphasize al-Bukhari's superiority over his teachers and other scholars, portraying him as an exceptional memorizer, as seen in *Tareekh al-Islam* and *Wafayat al-Mashahir wa'l-A'lam* by the famous historian and scholar al-Dhahabi (Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Uthman ibn Qaymaz al-Dhahabi) (Edition by Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, Vol. 6, p. 140). It was stated that: "He was known for his memorization abilities among his peers in the pursuit of knowledge. They used to sit around him and consult him about hadiths." Muhammad ibn Abi Hatim reported: "I heard Ibrahim al-Khawas saying: 'I saw Abu Zur'ah (a prominent scholar) as if he were a child in front of him, so impressed by his memorization.'"

Tafseer and Memorization of Hadiths by al-Bukhari

The story continues, emphasizing the exceptional memorization abilities of al-Bukhari, who was recognized even by his peers and teachers. From a young age, he was known for his sharp memory, and he would attend lessons without writing anything down until one day, after being urged by his companions, he demonstrated his incredible memorization skills.

The famous account from *Tareekh Baghdad* by al-Khatib al-Baghdadi describes a time when al-Bukhari, while still a young boy, attended the gatherings of his teachers in Basra but did not take notes. His companions questioned him about this, and after sixteen days, he responded that they had pressured him enough and he would show them his memorization. He recited over 15,000 hadiths from memory, astonishing everyone present. He further stated, "Do you think I waste my time? I do not waste my time at all." This incident highlights the extraordinary abilities that made him a unique scholar, capable of memorizing vast amounts of knowledge without relying on notes.

Further enhancing his legendary status, there are numerous stories about his unmatched memorization and intellectual prowess. For instance, in the *Shadharat al-Dhahab* by Ibn al-Imad al-Hanbali, it was mentioned that several scholars, including Abu Ahmad ibn 'Adi al-Jurjani, reported that when al-Bukhari came to Baghdad, he was praised for his unparalleled mastery in hadith collection and memorization. His memorization of hadiths was so precise that he could recount hadiths flawlessly and even correct mistakes in narrations from others.

These accounts help reinforce the image of al-Bukhari as a figure of legendary memory, one who surpassed his contemporaries and left a legacy that remains unmatched in the history of hadith scholarship.

The Story of the Hadiths Test

The story describes a well-known test that took place to assess al-Bukhari's memory and accuracy in narrating hadiths. The test involved a group of scholars who deliberately altered the texts and chains of narration of several hadiths. They presented these altered hadiths to al-Bukhari, one by one, to see if he could recognize their falsification.

The test started with the scholars asking al-Bukhari about different hadiths. For each hadith, al-Bukhari responded, "I do not know it." This continued for a series of hadiths, with al-Bukhari rejecting each one. The audience, which included some of the most knowledgeable scholars, began to doubt al-Bukhari's ability. Some even speculated that he might be unable to recognize the hadiths due to his supposed lack of understanding or knowledge.

However, after the last of the altered hadiths was presented, al-Bukhari finally spoke. He corrected each hadith and correctly identified the proper chain of narration (isnad) and the correct text (matn [8]) for each hadith. In other words, he traced the false isnads back to their real ones and restored the correct text of each hadith. The scholars were amazed, as al-Bukhari not only corrected the errors but did so in a way that demonstrated his unparalleled mastery of the hadiths.

This event solidified al-Bukhari's reputation as one of the greatest scholars in hadith science. The scholars acknowledged his remarkable memory and accuracy, and the story became a defining moment in his career.

The strange thing is that many scholars have repeated this story as if it were an unquestionable fact, almost like an axiom in the history of hadith. Yet, few have paused to critically examine the chains of narration (isnad) of this story or questioned its authenticity, despite the fact that such stories often become exaggerated or distorted over time.

[8] **matn"** (Arabic: متن) refers to the **core text** or **content** of a hadith (Prophetic saying). It is the part of the hadith that contains the actual message or the statement attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), excluding the chain of narration (**isnad**).

The Critique of the Story

In a comment on the story, published on the Al-Ukasha website, a scholar discussed the reliability and authenticity of the narrative, raising several doubts about its veracity. The critique offered several reasons for questioning the story:

1. **Unknown and Ambiguous Sources**: The narrators mentioned in the story are either unknown or ambiguously referenced, which raises questions about the authenticity of the chain of narration (isnad). The lack of clear identification of these individuals makes it difficult to establish the reliability of the story.
2. **Absence of Direct Witnesses**: Ibn 'Adi, who transmitted the story, did not cite any direct witnesses to the event. Instead, he merely reported what he heard from others. This raises the question: Did these people actually witness the event, or were they relaying it secondhand?
3. **No Account from al-Bukhari's Students**: Ibn 'Adi, who lived after al-Bukhari, could have easily obtained confirmation of such an important story from al-Bukhari's students, yet there is no mention of them narrating this story. This raises doubts about its authenticity.
4. **Distance Between Ibn 'Adi and al-Bukhari**: The gap between Ibn 'Adi and al-Bukhari is notable, with several intermediaries between them. This is problematic because, as in the case of other historical events, there may have been distortions or exaggerations as the story passed through multiple layers of narration.
5. **Unacceptable Actions in the Story**: Some scholars, including al-'Iraqi, argue that the actions described in the story—where scholars supposedly altered the chains of narration to test al-Bukhari—are inappropriate. Such behavior was generally frowned upon by scholars of hadith, and it would be strange if no one in such a large group of hadith experts criticized or rejected this practice.

In conclusion, the critique argues that the story lacks solid evidence and that many of the individuals involved were either not trustworthy or distant from the actual event. The scholar suggests that the story, while popular in certain circles, should be taken with caution and cannot be regarded as a verified historical fact. The remarks from other scholars, such as Al-Sakhawi and Al-Halabi, show that they, too, were hesitant to fully accept the narrative, and they left it unresolved or undetermined.

The comment further mentions that this issue has been addressed by Badr Abu Zayd in his work *At-Tahseel*, where he categorizes the story as one of the popular claims that lacks solid evidence.

The Commentary on the Story and Its Critique

The story, often narrated as an extraordinary feat of memory by Imam al-Bukhari, has been widely circulated, but it has raised several doubts among scholars. Sheikh Badr Abu Zayd, in his *At-Tahseel* (1/87), touches on these concerns. Despite the popularity and widespread transmission of this story, it was critiqued on the following grounds:

1. **Uncertain and Unidentified Sources**: The narrators mentioned in the story are often not named or are unclear in their identities, making it difficult to verify the reliability of the narration. In the case of Ibn 'Adi, who transmitted the story, there is no clear identification of the sources, and some scholars question the credibility of these narrators.
2. **The Story's Origins**: The story is attributed to Ibn 'Adi, the author of *Al-Kamil*, but the sources from which he took the narration are not reliable or well-established. Ibn 'Adi merely reports what he heard from others, raising doubts about its authenticity.
3. **The Test and Its Likely Exaggeration**: The most famous element of this story is the claim that Imam al-Bukhari, when faced with a series of mixed-up narrations (reversed chains of narration), was able to correct them instantly, proving his exceptional memory. However, many scholars believe this story to be exaggerated, if not entirely fabricated, because it presents al-Bukhari's memory as infallible and superhuman, to the extent that he is said to have "recorded" the correct chains without error in a single sitting. This portrayal stretches credibility, as it is implausible for any scholar, even one of al-Bukhari's stature, to correct and remember the narrations without mistake under such circumstances.
4. **The Role of the Testers**: The story further suggests that a group of scholars doubted al-Bukhari's reliability and subjected him to this "test" by presenting him with a set of hadiths with mixed-up chains. While it is plausible that scholars sometimes tested one another's knowledge, the idea that a group would deliberately challenge al-Bukhari in such an extreme manner appears inconsistent with the respect he commanded as a leading scholar of hadith. Some have raised concerns about the way these scholars are portrayed, suggesting that the story might be the result of a deliberate attempt to aggrandize al-Bukhari's image, portraying him as beyond reproach.
5. **The Purpose of the Story**: It seems that those who propagate this story aim to reinforce the "legend" of al-Bukhari's unmatched memory and expertise in hadith, elevating his status to mythic proportions. This has led to a distorted view of his capabilities, one that some scholars see as both illogical and unfair to his actual scholarly contributions.
6. **The Similar Story in al-Dhahabi's Work**: The story is also found in *Tareekh al-Islam* by Shams al-Din al-Dhahabi (6/140), where it is presented with more details but still maintains the same problematic themes. Al-Dhahabi recounts a similar scenario involving al-Bukhari's miraculous feat of memory, further contributing to the perpetuation of the myth.

In conclusion, while the story of al-Bukhari's legendary memory has been passed down through the centuries, many scholars now regard it with skepticism. They argue that it is an overblown narrative created to elevate al-Bukhari's status beyond what is historically accurate. The story's reliance on anonymous sources and the extreme portrayal of his abilities has led modern scholars to question its authenticity, with some suggesting it is more folklore than fact.

Critical Examination of the Narrations Regarding al-Bukhari's Memory

The narrative regarding the legendary memory of Imam al-Bukhari, especially the story of his passing the "test" in Baghdad and the subsequent one in Samarkand, has been widely circulated in hadith literature. The story suggests that al-Bukhari was so proficient in memorization that he could instantly correct misattributed chains of narration. However, this account, which presents al-Bukhari as flawless in his recall, has raised significant concerns among scholars, as it stretches the boundaries of reason and critical analysis.

The Baghdad and Samarkand "Tests":

The claim in the story is that al-Bukhari was tested by a group of scholars who intentionally mixed up chains of narration from different regions. They inserted the chain from *Sham* into the chain of *Iraq* and the chain from *Yemen* into the chain from *the Haramain* (the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina). Despite these manipulations, al-Bukhari was said to have noticed no errors in the hadiths, thereby demonstrating his extraordinary memory. This was meant to enhance the legend of al-Bukhari's impeccable knowledge.

However, these stories, though popular, raise questions:

1. **The Exaggeration of the Memory Test**: Even if al-Bukhari had an exceptional memory, the idea that he could instantly and flawlessly identify and correct such complex errors in an entire set of hadiths seems exaggerated. The story presents him as having an almost mechanical ability to detect mistakes, akin to recording the events on a tape recorder, which stretches the limits of believability.
2. **The Role of the "Testers"**: These accounts suggest that the scholars who tested al-Bukhari were suspicious of his abilities. However, it is highly improbable that a group of scholars would have treated such an esteemed figure in this manner. The story implies that they doubted his credibility and subjected him to an elaborate examination, which seems inconsistent with the respect he commanded in the scholarly community.
3. **The Multiplication of Stories**: In some versions of this story, such as those circulated in Samarkand, the "test" is said to involve four hundred hadiths. The suggestion that al-Bukhari corrected all of them in a single sitting only adds to the mystique surrounding his memory. But this level of precision and consistency, under such extraordinary conditions, remains highly suspect.

The Irony of Flawless Memory:

The irony becomes even more pronounced when considering that the Prophet Muhammad himself (peace be upon him) was capable of forgetting or experiencing forgetfulness. The hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari* (Book of the Virtues of the Quran) mentions a situation where the Prophet, upon hearing a man recite a verse of the Quran, acknowledges, "May Allah have mercy on him! He reminded me of a verse that I had forgotten."

This acknowledgment of the Prophet's own forgetfulness stands in stark contrast to the claim that Imam al-Bukhari possessed an infallible memory, to the point where he could never make a mistake or forget a detail. Some scholars find it difficult to accept that al-Bukhari's memory was seen as superior to that of the Prophet, a view that undermines the humility and human aspect of even the greatest scholars.

Theological and Scholarly Perspective:

From an Islamic theological perspective, the belief that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) could forget certain things is consistent with the teachings of the Quran. In Surah Al-Qiyama, Allah instructs the Prophet not to worry about the Quran's preservation:

"Do not move your tongue with it [the Quran], to hasten with it. Indeed, upon Us is its collection and its recitation. And when We have recited it, then follow its recitation." (Quran 75:16–18)

This divine assurance implies that the Prophet's role was to transmit the message without the burden of perfectly preserving it through his own memory alone. Allah Himself would ensure the preservation of the Quran, a fact that contrasts with the notion of human infallibility in the context of memorization. In light of this, the idea that al-Bukhari, despite being a monumental figure in hadith literature, would be portrayed as having a "flawless" memory is problematic. While his immense contributions to the compilation and authentication of hadiths are unquestioned, the elevation of his memory to mythic proportions seems to defy the reality of human limitations, even for the greatest scholars.

Conclusion:

The various stories surrounding al-Bukhari's memory and his tests in Baghdad and Samarkand are intriguing but should be approached with caution. While these accounts may reflect an attempt to highlight his extraordinary abilities, they also seem to enter the realm of exaggeration. A more balanced and nuanced understanding of al-Bukhari's legacy should acknowledge his brilliance in preserving the hadiths while recognizing that even the greatest of scholars were not exempt from human limitations. These mythic tales, while fascinating, should not overshadow the real achievements of Imam al-Bukhari in his meticulous work of compiling *Sahih al-Bukhari* based on rigorous standards of authenticity and scholarship.

The tongue should not be hurried with it because Allah has taken the responsibility of gathering it in the chest of His Prophet. However, in Sahih al-Bukhari, it is mentioned that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would forget his words. It is as if Allah (Exalted be He) made a promise to the Prophet, saying: "Do not worry about memorizing, for I have taken responsibility for gathering it and making it clear." But the scholars firmly believe that Bukhari never forgot, and that his memory was almost mythical, while our greatest Prophet did forget, and forgetfulness reached the point where he forgot certain verses of the Qur'an. This is in contrast to the mythical memory of Bukhari!

What surprises me even more is that some narrators have reported that Bukhari had poor memory. He would write down everything he heard and would forget even the names of his close relatives, and so on. Look at what is mentioned in the book "Siyar A'lam al-Nubala" by al-Dhahabi:

"It was said that he (Bukhari) once passed by a Sheikh in a private gathering, and the Sheikh informed him of the authentic hadiths that were presented to him. He was then told by someone: 'It has been reported to me that Abu Abdullah drank a memory-enhancing medicine called Bilāzar.' One day, I asked him privately: 'Is there a medicine that a person drinks to enhance their memory?' He replied: 'I don't know of any. But the most beneficial for memory is the sharpness of the mind and consistent reading.'

He continued: 'I was once living in Naysabur. Letters would come to me from Bukhara, and my relatives would read their greetings to me in the books. I wrote a letter to Bukhara and intended to send my greetings, but I forgot to include my greetings when I wrote the letter, and it was rare for me to forget knowledge like this.'

He said: 'I heard him say: My way of writing hadith was different from others. When I wrote about a man, I would ask about his name, nickname, lineage, and his transmission of hadith. If the man was knowledgeable, I would not hesitate to write about him. But if not, I would not write anything until I confirmed his authenticity.'

He also said: 'I heard al-'Abbas al-Duri say: I have never seen anyone seek hadith like Muhammad ibn Ismail (al-Bukhari). He did not leave a single weak link or a detail without eliminating it. Then he said to us: "Do not leave anything of his speech except that you write it down."'

(Excerpt from *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala* by al-Dhahabi, Volume 21, page 406)

The Legend of Sahih al-Bukhari

After our journey into the myths surrounding the personality of al-Bukhari and the exaggeration that accompanied it, he eventually became a figure that surpassed all historical, even religious, personalities—placing him alongside our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). I almost dare to claim that the personality of al-Bukhari, for most of us Muslims, is akin to the figure of Saint Paul for Christians, who is considered the true author of Christianity in its present form, despite originally being named Saul before converting to Christianity.

The exaggeration surrounding the personality of al-Bukhari, transforming him into a legendary figure superior to all of humanity in every way, even making him immune to human standards, has become so extreme that some even claim his greatness goes beyond human limits. It is as though his qualities cannot be measured by earthly standards, for his qualities are intertwined with dreams and myths about his life, leading to the glorification of the book attributed to Sheikh al-Bukhari.

This book was given the title “The Comprehensive Authentic Collection of the Affairs of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), his sayings, and his actions,” and the scholars refer to it as "The Comprehensive Authentic (al-Sahih)." This has paved the way for the myth-making of al-Bukhari’s personality, just as they sought to give legitimacy to his book by exaggerating his character. This is a common practice among scholars who aim to support truth by men, and so they add perfection to the personality of al-Bukhari. This way, it becomes easier to assign sacredness to the book attributed to him. As the character of al-Bukhari is presented as flawless, nothing can emanate from him except absolute truth and correctness, which is why the glorification of Sahih al-Bukhari arose, creating a myth around the book’s authenticity.

We will observe that the myth-making around Sahih al-Bukhari began as early as the writing of his book, as indicated by the context surrounding its compilation in the historical works of the past. For example, it was mentioned in the book *Tārikh Madīnat al-Dimashq*:

Damascus by Ibn Hibb al-Allah 52/72, and The Comprehensive Collection of the Narrator's Character 2/185 on the authority of al-Bukhari

Al-Bukhari himself said: "I composed my *Sahih* over the span of sixteen years, extracting it from six hundred thousand narrations."

Thus, Sahih al-Bukhari took sixteen years to compile, and it almost seems as if *Sahih al-Bukhari* were a research in biology, anthropology, or any other exact science that brings forth theories which completely change the concept of the universe and transform humanity from misguidance to guidance. Every scholar of this book will easily realize that it is strange to say that al-Bukhari spent sixteen years compiling it and that he selected it from six hundred thousand hadiths. We will discuss all of this in the section on the fall of the legend to uncover the truth behind these myths that surround the compilation of Sahih al-Bukhari.

In the introduction to *Fath al-Bari* by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, it is narrated: "Abu al-Haytham al-Kushaymi said, 'I heard al-Farbri say, 'I heard Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari say: "I did not place a hadith in my *Sahih* except after I had purified myself and prayed two rak'ahs."'" And al-Bukhari said: "I compiled the *Sahih* from six hundred thousand hadiths over the course of sixteen years, and I made it a proof between me and Allah."

Abu Sa'id al-Idrisi narrated from Sulayman ibn Dawood al-Harawi, who heard Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Hashim say: "Umar ibn Muhammad ibn Bajir al-Bajiri heard Muhammad ibn Ismail say: 'I compiled my *Sahih* in the Grand Mosque, and I did not include any hadith in it until I had sought the guidance of Allah and prayed two rak'ahs, being certain of its authenticity.'"

I say: The combination of this narration with the previous one shows that al-Bukhari initially compiled and arranged his *Sahih* in the Grand Mosque, but then he would present his hadiths in his hometown and elsewhere. This is indicated by the fact that he spent sixteen years compiling it, and it is known that he did not reside in Mecca for all that time. Ibn 'Adi also narrated from a group of scholars that al-Bukhari moved the chapters of his *Sahih* between the tomb of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his pulpit, praying two rak'ahs for each chapter. I say: There is no contradiction here, as it is likely that initially, he wrote in a rough draft, but later, he organized and perfected it.

He moved it from the rough draft to the final version of "The Guide for the Traveler" (Hadi al-Sari).

After the addition of a spiritual touch, these narrations were fabricated to confirm that Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari would not write or select any hadith for his *Sahih* from a collection of over half a million hadiths, except after purifying himself, performing istikhara [9] (seeking Allah's guidance), and praying two rak'ahs. Can you imagine how many times al-Bukhari must have performed istikhara? The number would be 600,000 times, meaning 1.2 million rak'ahs over the span of sixteen years!!!

And the compilation of *Sahih al-Bukhari* also began or took place in the Grand Mosque, despite the contradictory statements about this and despite Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani's attempt to justify it apologetically. The narration, which states that he spent sixteen years compiling and gathering it contradicts, both in form and content, with the narration that affirms he compiled it while residing in Mecca. Historically, it has not been established that he spent all that time in Mecca, yet some scholars attempt to resolve such contradictions in miraculous ways while rejecting even the smallest contradictions in other schools of thought or creeds!

Furthermore, the matter reached a point where scholars of *Sahih al-Bukhari* from among the fuqaha and hadith scholars began to compare this book to the Book of Allah revealed to His Prophet. They shamelessly declared it to be "the most authentic book after the Book of Allah," as narrated by al-Nawawi, al-Dhahabi, and others. The comparison between the divine Qur'an, the revealed, absolute, and comprehensive book — in form and content, in structure and meaning, recited as an act of worship, and a miracle in every detail — and a human-made book, flawed by human weakness, human error, and human attributes, constitutes a violation of the sanctity of Allah's words. It is as though they did not heed Allah's words in Surah al-Nisa (4:82):

"Do they not reflect upon the Qur'an? Had it been from other than Allah, they would have found therein much contradiction."

According to this verse, the only book without contradiction is the Qur'an, and this includes all other books.

The Qur'an, including *Sahih al-Bukhari*, is considered to be preserved, yet the mentality of blind adherence to the scholars has led to the belief that everything in *Sahih al-Bukhari* is authentic. All you need to do is read these quotations to witness the astonishing nature of this belief.

Imam al-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "The scholars, may Allah have mercy on them, have agreed that the most authentic books after the Book of Allah are *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, and the ummah has accepted them with approval." (Introduction to *Sharh Muslim*, 14/1).

[9] **Istikhara** (Arabic: استخارة) is a special prayer in Islamic tradition that seeks guidance from Allah (God) when a person faces uncertainty or needs help making an important decision. The word "istikhara" comes from the root word **خَيْر** ("khayr"), meaning "goodness," and it translates to "seeking the good."

This glorification of *Sahih al-Bukhari* was also echoed by Sheikh Muhammad al-Munajjid on his website "Islamic Network," where he emphasized the exalted status of Sahih al-Bukhari. He wrote:

"Praise be to Allah, Sahih al-Bukhari, the book of Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, is the most authentic book after the Book of Allah. Scholars, hadith scholars, and memorists continue to testify to its greatness and its high rank in authenticity and precision."

He further mentions that the scholar al-Hafiz Abu Amr ibn al-‘Asqalani wrote in his *Siyanat Sahih Muslim* (p. 86), quoting Imam al-Juwayni, the Imam of the Haram, who said:

"There is no room for doubt that everything found in the books of al-Bukhari and Muslim is valid, because the consensus of the Muslim scholars affirms their authenticity."

The Sheikh concludes by affirming:

"This is not an exaggeration. Al-Bukhari is the great and renowned Imam, acknowledged by all hadith scholars for his memorization and precision. He would seek Allah's guidance and pray two rak'ahs for every hadith he included in his book until it was completed in this way."

While some criticisms have been directed at specific hadiths included in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, it is asserted that there is no harm in declaring the entire book authentic, for the following reasons:

- The majority of scholars and hadith experts agree with Imam al-Bukhari’s judgment in what he selected, even when criticisms have been raised.

It is well known that it is not a sound approach to accept criticism merely because it exists; rather, it is a matter of evidence and reasoning. Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) elaborated on this issue in his monumental work *Fath al-Bari*, particularly in the introduction titled *Hady al-Sari*, where he responded to these criticisms and clarified the proper response.

Imam al-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"The ummah has unanimously agreed on the authenticity of these two books and the obligation of acting upon their hadiths." (End of quote, *Tahdhīb al-Asmā’ wal-Lughāt*, 1/73).

Sheikh Ibn Taymiyyah said:

"There is no book under the heavens more authentic than Sahih al-Bukhari *and* Sahih Muslim *after the Qur'an."* (End of quote, *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*, 18/74).

Sheikh Muhammad ibn Salih al-Munajjid added:

"The words of Ibn al-Qayyim indicate that the scholars have agreed on the superiority of Sahih al-Bukhari *in terms of authenticity over* Sahih Muslim*, except for what Abu Ya'la al-Nisaburi reported: that* Sahih Muslim *is more authentic than* Sahih al-Bukhari*, without delving into the matter of authenticity."* (End of quote, with minor modification).

Therefore, this status of reverence and respect for these books must remain as it is in the hearts of the people. It is impermissible to engage in efforts that cast doubt or raise objections regarding their hadiths. These essential references, upon which the scholars rely to determine Islamic rulings, should not be criticized or belittled in any way that would undermine their credibility in the hearts of the people, whether learned or ignorant.

Look, reader, at how these individuals have made the mere act of criticizing *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* something impermissible. According to their view, this contradicts the reverence and respect that these books are due, a position that forms a strong protective barrier around them. This is the mindset that has affected people's thinking, such that they now hesitate to approach a human-authored book, despite its possible flaws and errors, as if criticizing it would be akin to criticizing Islam itself. It is as though these books were divinely revealed, while Allah (Glorified and Exalted) has repeatedly called us to approach His revelations with wisdom and reason.

the fatwa of Dr. Muhammad Rateb al-Nabulsi, who issued a response to a question about denying a hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari. The question asked whether rejecting a hadith, like the event of the Prophet’s chest being split, based on intellectual or logical grounds, would lead one to disbelief, and whether all hadiths in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* are authentic.

Dr. al-Nabulsi responded in the following manner:

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, and peace and blessings be upon our Master Muhammad, the truthful and trustworthy.

"To answer your question, we inform you as follows: anyone who rejects a sound hadith with their intellect has disbelieved in Allah, because if a hadith is authentic, it is considered a revelation. Rejecting it on the basis of intellect is disbelief. The Muslims have unanimously agreed that everything in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* is authentic."

Dr. Muhammad Rateb al-Nabulsi

"All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds."

This fatwa by Dr. Muhammad Rateb al-Nabulsi clearly states that anyone who denies an authentic hadith from the *Sahihain* (Bukhari and Muslim) is considered a disbeliever, because rejecting such hadith is akin to rejecting divine revelation. However, there are other opinions which are less severe, considering the one who denies a hadith from *Sahih al-Bukhari* or *Sahih Muslim* as misguided, an innovator, and stubborn. For example, there are some scholars who argue that denying the authenticity of any hadith from these two books is a form of deviation from the correct understanding.

This view reflects the intense veneration some scholars and followers have for *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, elevating their status to the point where questioning any hadith within them is regarded as a grave error or even disbelief.

In a fatwa published on the "Islam Web" website on March 7, 2010, under number 132912, the following was stated:

Praise be to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, and his companions. After that:

When a hadith meets the well-known conditions of authenticity accepted by scholars, it must be accepted. If it is confirmed in *Sahih al-Bukhari* or *Sahih Muslim*, the matter is certain, because the Muslim community has accepted the hadiths of these two books. Whoever dislikes this is considered an innovator, misguided, and arrogant. Al-Nawawi said in his *Sharh Sahih Muslim*: "The scholars have agreed, may Allah have mercy on them, that the most authentic books after the Holy Qur'an are *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, and the ummah has accepted them. The book of Bukhari is the most authentic of the two and contains more benefits and knowledge, both clear and hidden."

In response to a question on the "Islam Web" site regarding someone denying the hadith about *drinking camel urine* in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, the answer was as follows:

Answer:

First, the Muslim must know that *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* are considered the most authentic books after the Book of Allah, and all the hadiths in them that are proven to be authentic from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are correct. A Muslim is obligated to believe in them, confirm them, and act according to their implications. It is not permissible for a Muslim to doubt them or say, *"I do not believe them and think they are incorrect,"* because the duty of a Muslim is to submit to and accept the commands of Allah and His Messenger, and to

confirm everything that is reported in the Qur'an and Sunnah, including the news and rulings, and to be pleased with them in their entirety, both in general and in detail.

If a Muslim has doubts or confusion about a matter, they should suspect their own understanding and intellect, and then seek knowledge from specialists in the field. It is not permissible for a Muslim to use their intellect to reject the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Whoever rejects the commands of Allah and His Messenger or any report from the Qur'an and Sunnah, after knowing that it is true and correct, but does not accept it due to their intellect and insists on their opinion, commits major disbelief that takes them out of the fold of Islam. The same applies to anyone who merely doubts the truth of these texts.

Thus, the response emphasizes that anyone who rejects or doubts the hadiths found in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim after confirming their authenticity is considered a disbeliever.

So, even merely doubting one of the hadiths in *Sahih al-Bukhari* or *Sahih Muslim* leads to apostasy and causes one to leave the faith. Have you ever seen a more exaggerated reverence for a book than this? Have you ever witnessed the creation of a more powerful myth than this?

As for Sheikh Rabee' al-Madkhali, he considers the denial of a hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari* to be akin to denying the Qur'an itself, both in judgment and in terms of their ruling. This is evident from his statement: "Whoever denies this denies the Qur'an. The Qur'an was transmitted to us by mutawatir (continuous) transmission, and the entire ummah has transmitted it. Likewise, *Sahih al-Bukhari* was transmitted by the entire ummah, and all thanks are due to Allah. If you go to the remote areas where non-Arabs live, you will find them accepting Sahih al-Bukhari. If you go to libraries, you will find thousands of copies of this book—handwritten copies, not just printed ones. Go to the libraries of Egypt, Turkey, India, Pakistan, or even Europe and America, and you will find thousands of copies of Sahih al-Bukhari. Sahih al-Bukhari is so authentic that even the Jews and Christians do not deny it; they accept it. It is a mutawatir and widely known matter among both Muslims and non-Muslims. So, if a person says otherwise, they should keep their thoughts to themselves. This person has no respect for saying such words!"
— [Audio tape titled: "The Obligation of Following, Not Innovation"]

This is the reality that ultimately resulted in the sanctification of certain individuals, elevating them to statuses even higher than those of Prophethood and the Message. This has led us to the same state that existed in previous nations, where people worshiped others besides Allah and took them as lords. This is the creation of religious priesthood, just as it existed with them, as Allah says in the Qur'an:

"They took their rabbis and monks as lords besides Allah and [also] the Messiah, the son of Mary. And they were not commanded except to worship one God; there is no deity except Him. Exalted is He above what they associate with Him." [Surah At-Tawbah 9:31].

The glorification and reverence for *Sahih al-Bukhari* and its hadiths has become an integral part of religious tradition. This process began with the compilation of hadiths and the establishment of what is called the science of hadith, which aimed from the very beginning to sideline the Qur'an in favor of the hadith collections. Indeed, this is what happened: the Book of Allah was neglected in favor of the books of narrations.

The field of hadith sciences led to the creation of a historical Islam rather than an Islam based on revelation. In the upcoming two chapters of this book, we will truly address the reality of *Sahih al-Bukhari* as one of the most revered and sacred books of religious tradition. We will examine the claim that the attribution of *Sahih al-Bukhari* to Imam al-Bukhari is certain and definitive. Additionally, we will explore whether the *Sahih al-Bukhari* we have in our hands today is the same version that has been passed down through generations since the death of Imam al-Bukhari in 256 AH.

Chapter 4: The Fall of the Legend

1. The Myth in Numbers
2. The Lie of Consensus
3. Scholars Who Weakened Hadiths in the Two Sahihs
4. Bukhari is Criticized and Regarded as Unreliable In Hadith
5. Bukhari Hadiths

The Myth in Numbers

The exaggeration in the book of *Sahih al-Bukhari*, and its elevation above the Book of Allah, despite the numerous fabrications, myths, and legends contained within it, has become an unquestioned matter among scholars. In fact, anyone who browses this book will encounter grave insults against Allah, His Messenger, His Book, the mothers of the believers, humanity as a whole, and a disgrace to human reason that is beyond description. This is why we have taken a moment to critically examine this book, to expose its myth that has persisted for twelve centuries, and to challenge the illusions, fabrications, and legends that were built upon it. These were later transformed into a religion, defended to such an extent that those who reject it have been excommunicated, fought against, and, in many cases, their lives taken. What is the source of this destructive terrorist ideology? It is nothing but the narratives passed down through the books of tradition, including *Sahih al-Bukhari*, far removed from the tolerance, justice, wisdom, and humanity of the Qur'an.

For these individuals, it has become far easier to accept insults against the Qur'an than to criticize *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Their form of Islam is based on the contents of this human-made book, which has no relation to the Qur'an. This is the truth they refuse to acknowledge publicly because admitting it would be intellectual, political, social, and religious suicide. The majority of Muslims would reject them. But they have succeeded in gradually removing the Qur'an from people's lives, confining it to mere recitation during special occasions, without implementing its teachings in their daily lives. The Qur'an, for them, is simply a means to attract blessings, a tool to perfect its recitation and pronunciation, rather than to reflect upon, apply, or follow its guidance.

Thus, after recognizing the entire myth and its contents, it is necessary to dismantle and refute this myth. We will now expose its falsehood in the harsh language of truth, which spares no one and does not bow to any preconceived ideology.

The Myth of Bukhari's Memorization

The story we mentioned in the previous chapter of this book relates to the memory of Imam al-Bukhari, and there is a narration found in *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala* by Al-Dhahabi. The narration reads as follows:

"Muhammad ibn Abi Hatim al-Warraq said: I heard Hashim ibn Ismail and another person say: 'Abu Abdullah al-Bukhari used to frequently visit us while he was still a young boy, but he didn't write anything down. This continued for some time, and we said to him: "You attend our sessions, but you don't write anything. What do you do?" He replied to us one day, after sixteen days: "You have both asked me repeatedly, so I will write down what you have taught me." So we brought to him all that we had written down, and he added more than fifteen thousand hadiths to it. He then recited all of them from memory to the extent that we began to compare our written books with his memorized ones. He then said: "Do you think I am attending these sessions for no reason, wasting my time?" We realized that no one could surpass him in knowledge."

Based on this narration, al-Bukhari attended sessions to learn hadith for a period of sixteen days, during which he memorized fifteen thousand hadiths alongside his peers. The hadith students would write down everything that was dictated to them, while al-Bukhari did not write anything. After a rigorous test, the students discovered that Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari had memorized those fifteen thousand hadiths without writing them down—he had memorized them directly after hearing them from the teachers. They were immediately imprinted on his mind as soon as he heard them.

To verify or disprove this story, all we need to do is perform a simple calculation to understand how much al-Bukhari could memorize each day. If we divide the fifteen thousand hadiths by the period of sixteen days it took him to memorize them, we get an average of 937 hadiths per day. In other words, al-Bukhari was memorizing 937 hadiths every single day during his time with the teachers.

To further analyze this, let's assume al-Bukhari spent five hours each day with his teachers. This means he would have memorized 187 hadiths every hour, or more than three hadiths per minute!

This figure appears to be highly exaggerated, raising serious questions about the credibility of this story. The claim that someone could memorize such an enormous number of hadiths daily under these circumstances seems unrealistic and defies reasonable limits of human memory and learning.

The Myth of Bukhari's Memorization (continued)

We must ask: how could the teachers who were teaching al-Bukhari narrate three hadiths per minute for him to memorize? This is a fantastical claim that leads to a breakdown in logic when confronted with simple calculations. It is impossible for any person to record three hadiths per minute, even if we were to be lenient and assume that al-Bukhari sat for eight hours each day with his teachers. This would still result in an average of two hadiths per minute, which is also impossible, especially when we consider that hadith transmission involves both the chain of narration (*isnad*) and the text (*matn*), which takes time. But the narrators stop using their minds when it comes to Imam al-Bukhari, the myth. According to the narration, the hadith dictation process was slow to allow the students to write down what was being transmitted.

This story does not only make these claims, but it also confirms that, at the end of the sixteenth day, the students brought out all they had written, i.e., the fifteen thousand hadiths, and al-Bukhari was able to recite all of them from memory, while they compared their written versions to his memory. All of this supposedly occurred over a span of sixteen days. If we break it down, al-Bukhari would have memorized one hadith every two seconds. This means that before the teacher could even finish the hadith, al-Bukhari would have already memorized it! But how is it possible for anyone to believe such an explicit lie? How could these myths have entrenched themselves in the minds of people such that they accepted them without questioning or scrutinizing them?

Moreover, the story continues in *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala* by Al-Dhahabi, where another narration is found that claims al-Bukhari took hadiths from over a thousand teachers. The narration goes as follows:

"Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Ganjar said in the History of Bukhara: I heard Abu Amr Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Muqri' say: I heard Mahib ibn Salim, and Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Qattan, Imam of Karmaniyyah, say: I heard Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari say: 'I wrote from over a thousand teachers, each one of them narrating at least ten thousand hadiths or more. I don't have a hadith except that I know its chain of narration.'"

This additional story reinforces the idea that al-Bukhari was able to record from over a thousand teachers, each contributing thousands of hadiths. However, there is a clear contradiction here with the earlier claim that al-Bukhari memorized tens of thousands of hadiths in a mere sixteen days. The problem is not only with the numbers presented but with the unrealistic nature of these accounts. How can we reconcile such claims with any sense of historical credibility or human capacity? This discrepancy casts serious doubt on the authenticity of these stories and the mythical image of Imam al-Bukhari.

The narration claiming that Imam al-Bukhari memorized from over a thousand teachers and that he took more than ten thousand hadiths from each of them suggests that al-Bukhari had memorized over ten million hadiths. However, this directly contradicts other conflicting narrations, some of which claim that al-Bukhari memorized 300,000 hadiths, while others claim 600,000 hadiths. With simple calculations, it is clear that this new narration suggests he memorized ten million hadiths *with their chains of narration*.

This is strange because if we gather all the hadiths from the various books of hadith and add in the weak hadiths that were excluded by the scholars of the hadith books—both weak and authentic—this total wouldn't even reach one million. So, where did the remaining nine million hadiths come from? This is truly a matter of great astonishment.

Another question arises when we talk about al-Bukhari memorizing ten million hadiths: How much time would have been required to memorize such an enormous number of hadiths? It is impossible that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said all of them. If we were to assume—just for the sake of argument—that al-Bukhari spent thirty years memorizing hadiths and that he dedicated four hours per day to memorization, and if we ignore his travels across towns, cities, and deserts on horseback or on a mule to seek hadith narrators, this would still imply that al-Bukhari was memorizing three hadiths per minute. This is clearly impossible, fantastical, and utterly unreasonable.

I feel deeply frustrated discussing these absurdities because I find myself in the twenty-first century, in an era of remarkable development across all fields—an age of space exploration, science, and reason—having to argue and analyze these myths, trying to prove that these narrations are fabricated and impossible to be true.

Bukhari's Journey in Collecting Hadith:

Looking at the map, it is clear that Bukhari's journey in collecting hadith lasted for many years, during which he traveled using slow means of transportation like donkeys, mules, horses, camels, ships at sea, and boats on rivers. This means his movement was very slow, and it is not comparable to the transportation means of our time. "It is clear" that all of this is lies and nonsense.

I will now share an article by the Egyptian writer Abdel Fattah Asaker from the Egyptian forum "Al-Waha," titled "Numbers Do Not Lie," where he wrote:[10]

[10] Abdel Fattah Asaker, an Egyptian writer known for his contributions to discussions on logic, mathematics, and cultural analysis, authored an article titled **"Numbers Do Not Lie"** in the Egyptian forum *Al-Waha*. In this piece, Asaker explored the inherent objectivity and reliability of numerical data as a means of understanding reality, contrasting it with the subjectivity and biases often present in human perceptions and narratives.

"Statistics on Narrations?! Only rational people deal with what is written, not with the writer."

Bukhari said in the introduction mentioned by Ibn Hajar in the book *Maqaddimah Fath...*

Bukhari (collected) 600,000 (six hundred thousand) hadiths in 16 (sixteen) years. Bukhari was born in the year 194 AH and died in the year 256 AH.

If we assume that each hadith took, on average, five minutes of time from the Prophet (peace be upon him), the total time required for 600,000 hadiths would be:

600,000 × 5 = 3,000,000 (three million minutes).

This equals:

3,000,000 ÷ 60 = 50,000 (fifty thousand) hours.

If we assume that he worked 8 hours a day, the 50,000 hours would equal:

50,000 ÷ 8 = 6,250 days.

Considering that the Islamic year is approximately 355 days, the number of years required would be:

6,250 ÷ 355 = 17.60505633, which is approximately **17 years** and if we assume that each hadith took 6 minutes, the total time required for 600,000 hadiths would be:

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. **The Neutrality of Numbers**: Asaker emphasizes that numbers, unlike human interpretations or emotions, are inherently neutral and objective. They do not carry political, cultural, or ideological biases, making them a universal language for conveying facts and truths.
2. **Application in Society**: The article delves into how numbers can clarify complex social, economic, and political realities. For instance, statistical analysis can reveal truths about population growth, economic disparities, or the effectiveness of policies, cutting through rhetoric and propaganda.
3. **Misuse of Statistics**: While numbers themselves are truthful, Asaker warns against their manipulation. He critiques instances where data is selectively presented or misinterpreted to serve agendas, urging readers to critically evaluate the source and context of numerical claims.
4. **The Philosophical Implications**: Beyond practical applications, Asaker reflects on the philosophical significance of numbers. He suggests that they represent an immutable aspect of the universe, connecting human reasoning to a greater cosmic order.
5. **Cultural and Historical Perspectives**: The article draws on examples from Egyptian history and broader human civilizations, illustrating how numbers have been used in fields ranging from architecture (e.g., the construction of the pyramids) to governance and trade.

600,000 × 6 = 3,600,000 minutes, which equals:
3,600,000 ÷ 60 = 60,000 hours.

This would equal:
60,000 ÷ 8 = 7,500 days.
And if we divide by 355 days per year, the total years required would be:
7,500 ÷ 355 = 21.1261, which is approximately **21 years**.
If we assume each hadith took 7 minutes:
600,000 × 7 = 4,200,000 minutes, which equals:
4,200,000 ÷ 60 = 70,000 hours.

This would equal:
70,000 ÷ 8 = 8,750 days.

And for the years:
8,750 ÷ 355 = 24.7, approximately **24 years**.
If we assume each hadith took 8 minutes:
600,000 × 8 = 4,800,000 minutes, which equals:
4,800,000 ÷ 60 = 80,000 hours.
This would equal:
80,000 ÷ 8 = 10,000 days.

For the years:
10,000 ÷ 355 = 28.17, approximately **28 years**.
If we assume each hadith took 9 minutes:
600,000 × 9 = 5,400,000 minutes, which equals:
5,400,000 ÷ 60 = 90,000 hours.
This would equal:
90,000 ÷ 8 = 11,250 days.

And for the years:

11,250 ÷ 355 = 31.7, approximately **31 years**.

If we assume that each hadith took 10 minutes, the total time required for 600,000 hadiths would be:

600,000 × 10 = 6,000,000 minutes, which equals:

6,000,000 ÷ 60 = 100,000 hours.

This would equal:

100,000 ÷ 8 = 12,500 days.

And for the years:

12,500 ÷ 355 = 35.2, approximately **35 years**.

Notice that the duration of the Prophet's mission during his time was **23** years, with **13** years in Mecca and **10** years in Medina.

In other words, the hadith attributed to the Porphet (peace be upon him) is longer then him entier mission. As always, the words of Allah are true, as He said in the Holy Qur'an:

These are the verses of Allah which We recite to you in truth. Then in what statement after Allah and His verses will they believe? Woe to every sinful liar! [Surah Al-Jathiya, verses 6–7]

and

"Who hears the verses of Allah recited to him, then persists in arrogance as if he did not hear them. So give him tidings of a painful punishment. And when he knows something of Our verses, he takes them in ridicule. For those there is a humiliating punishment. Before them is Hell, and what they have earned will not avail them at all, nor will they have any protectors apart from Allah. For them is a punishment great. This is guidance. And those who disbelieve in the verses of their Lord will have a punishment of burning fire." [Surah Al-Jathiya, verses 6-11]

The noble and authentic Sunnah of the Prophet is the application of Allah's Book, both in speech and action and acceptance. Whoever denies this is a denier of the Qur'an itself.

And the first to speak of the Qur'an are the scholars who heard it from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). They passed on his words through chains of transmission, even if the chain was weak.

Every narration mentioned in the books of hadith is authentic and in agreement with the Book of Allah, even if the chain is weak.

Anyone who follows something other than the Book of Allah has contradicted Allah's command, as He says in verse 3 of Surah Al-A'raf:

"Follow what has been sent down to you from your Lord and do not follow other than Him, protectors. Little do you remember."

What is the position of Islam regarding those who disobey Allah's command?

"And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses His limits, He will admit him to a Fire, to abide therein forever, and for him is a humiliating punishment." [Surah An-Nisa, verse 14]

"It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should have any choice in their matter. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly gone astray into clear error." (33:36)

Scientific research in Islamic thought and culture increases our respect, appreciation, and reverence for our scholars, both the living and the dead because knowledge is a mercy among its people.

We ask Allah, the Generous, to join us with those who preceded us in faith, along with the Prophets, the truthful ones, and the martyrs. We also ask Him to grant us and the living among them the blessing of reflecting on His Book and acting upon it in our lives, in accordance with His Messenger – peace and blessings be upon him – whose character was the Qur'an. We should deal with others using this Qur'anic moral framework, not the priestly ethics that condemn and alienate—end of quote.

Then, the commentator added to his article:

I believe that of the 600,000 hadiths, al-Bukhari rejected about 593,000, meaning that, in terms of quantity, al-Bukhari himself was one of the greatest rejecters of hadith. It is also evident from al-Bukhari's boasting that he either lied or selected fabricated hadiths because a period of 15 years is not enough for anyone to conduct a scientific search through 600,000 hadiths (which would take around five minutes per hadith, a time shorter than boiling an egg!), even in the age

of information and knowledge, let alone in an era when travel to verify a matter could take months on the back of camels![11]

So, despite all the claims, the numbers do not add up and cannot be explained logically. It is clear that the knowledge of hadith that al-Bukhari claims to have was either fabricated or greatly exaggerated.

This is why, when we look at earlier hadith collections, despite them being closer to the time of the events, we find that they contain fewer hadiths compared to later books like al-Bukhari's. For example, the "Sahifah of Hammam ibn Munabbih" contains only 138 hadiths, while al-Bukhari, more than 100 years later, claims to have included around 7,000 hadiths from the 600,000. This exponential increase in the number of hadiths as time moves further away from the actual events leaves no room for doubt that hadiths were being fabricated on a wide scale.

"And the early hadith books, although they are closer to the event, often contain weak chains of narration, and the narrations are not directly attributed to the Messenger. However, as time progresses further from the event, the chains of narration in later hadith books, such as Sahih al-Bukhari, become more complete and flawless. All of this, despite the fact that one would expect the opposite. The further a person is from the event in time, the expected outcome should be a reduction in the number of hadiths and a weakening of the chain of narration. This observation indicates that the chains of narration were indeed being fabricated on a large scale."

"Although the responses to this calculation process tend to focus on the different methods of hadith collection in the context of narrators, attempting to present those who engage in these calculations as ignorant of hadith, this argument cannot be considered a valid response. Many of the hadiths, even with multiple chains of narration, do not exceed the fingers on one hand. The most numerous hadiths in hadith books number around 300, at most. If we consider that most hadiths are 'ahad' (individual) narrations in their generality, we can see the disproportion between the claims and the actual situation."

"Let us now perform a numerical calculation as we examine the claim attributed to Sheikh Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari regarding his compilation of 600,000 hadiths over 16 years. This claim is often repeated by the scholars who take pride in it. They assert that during his travels across the lands of Allah, seeking hadith from the Messenger of Allah, al-Bukhari was able to collect 600,000 hadiths, from which he selected around 7,000, ultimately compiling the famous book known as 'Al-Jami' al-Sahih'. The claim is that his journey to collect hadith lasted 16 years, during which he traveled on his mule, horse, or camel. His movement was extremely

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Using mathematical reasoning, it's clear that the claim of reviewing 600,000 hadiths in 15 years, each taking 5 minutes, would result in more than 5.7 years of continuous work. This does not account for the necessary breaks, travel, teaching, and other scholarly activities, making it practically impossible for Al-Bukhari to have completed his work in such a short amount of time if he had indeed reviewed each hadith for only 5 minutes. This simple calculation demonstrates the unrealistic nature of the claim and underscores the sophisticated and diligent methodology Al-Bukhari must have employed over the 15 years to select only the most authentic hadiths.

slow, often taking days or even months to travel from one region to another in search of hadith from here and there, from one place to another. If we accept, for argument's sake, that al-Bukhari collected one hadith per day, the task of collecting 600,000 hadiths would require 600,000 days—meaning he would need more than 1,600 years to complete such a collection!"

"One thousand six hundred years, meaning that al-Bukhari would still be gathering the hadiths of the Messenger of Allah to this day. Therefore, it is impossible for him to have collected 600,000 hadiths in 16 years, as claimed by those who glorify the tradition of human worship."

Even if we were to relax the calculation and assume that al-Bukhari collected ten hadiths per day, this would still require 164 years. This would add 102 years to the 62 years he lived, meaning he would need 164 years in total, which is clearly impossible. Therefore, the historical idolaters insist that we should not measure al-Bukhari by human standards but that we should accept these "narratives" without applying reason. Any exercise of the mind will disprove the legend, which took centuries to construct, by the religious priesthood who numbed people and stopped their intellects, while the mission was to produce backwardness in the name of religion, from which religion is innocent.

Some of scholars try to present anyone who questions this tradition as ignorant, attempting to trivialize these absurdities by saying that al-Bukhari spent his entire life gathering hadiths of the Messenger of Allah, even from his childhood. We say to them, even if he had started collecting hadiths while in his mother's womb, he still would not have been able to collect 600,000 hadiths in 62 years, considering the methods stated in their books, which say he traveled on his mule or horse across towns and villages to collect hadiths, going back and forth from one country to another—from Bukhara to Makkah, passing through Iraq, Sham, and other parts of the vast Islamic empire at the time."

Let us now turn to the story of al-Bukhari's ablution and his offering of two rak'ahs before writing any hadith and use numbers once again to confirm the authenticity of this historical account. If we assume that the divine response to al-Bukhari's istikhara (prayer for guidance) took one day, then he would have needed 600,000 days, which equals more than 1,600 years. Based on this, al-Bukhari would still not have completed the compilation of his book 'Sahih al-Bukhari' today."

Even in this era, the custodians of compounded ignorance still defend and believe in these myths, where some of them claim to justify this nonsense by saying that Bukhari used to perform ablution and pray two rak'ahs of istikhara before selecting any hadiths to record in *Sahih*, meaning that he performed istikhara and bathed only 7,300 times.

To address the claim that if Bukhari performed Istikhara for every hadith he included in his book, what would be the point if he had already made his decision in advance? Istikhara is performed when there is uncertainty about a matter, and Bukhari had 600,000 hadiths to choose from, not knowing in advance which ones he would select. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that he performed Istikhara.

Even if we accept the argument that he performed Istikhara 7,300 times, and the divine response occurred in one day, Bukhari would have needed over twenty years to complete this process, not twelve years! This calculation assumes that he was working full-time. The myth is refuted in every case by the cold, objective math—unbiased and unaffected by any myth or legend.

The Lie of Consensus

Another narrative that the followers of religious heritage consider as a stronghold to defend Sahih al-Bukhari is that the Muslim ummah received this book through consensus and that the ummah believes that everything in Sahih al-Bukhari is correct without any doubt and that there is a unanimous agreement on this. Therefore, anyone who denies any of the hadiths from Bukhari is condemned to hellfire, as the takfiri fatwas often proclaim.

We have quoted some of these fatwas in this book, so we are not accused of fabricating lies about the scholars. The truth, which is undeniable and will be shown shortly, is that the narrative of consensus regarding Sahih al-Bukhari is nothing but a lie, one of the many lies that fill the books of heritage. It is also a myth, a fabrication that is the basis for this narrative, which we will dismantle using words from the very heritage books themselves, revered by these scholars who are under the influence of the Wahhabi doctrine, a doctrine that excommunicates and blindly imitates without any true understanding. They have exploited their influence to defend their falsehoods at the cost of tarnishing Islam, which advocates for the use of reason, logic, reflection, and contemplation rather than blind imitation that lacks insight.

To debunk this myth, it is enough to state that the Shi'a, who represent a significant portion of the Muslim population, do not believe in the authenticity of Sahih al-Bukhari and reject everything in it. So, where is the consensus, then, unless we consider the Shi'a as infidels and exclude them from the Muslim community, no longer considering them among the people of the qibla? If we accept this, we will find many scholars who find it easy to excommunicate millions of Muslims, all in order to uphold the claim that the ummah unanimously agrees that Sahih al-Bukhari is the most authentic book after the Quran and that they accepted it as containing nothing but what is correct.

However, when we confront the myth of this narrative, we will find the silence of the religious scholars who propagate it. What will these guardians of dogma say if we cite their scholars who are considered authoritative in religious matters? This is what we will uncover as we continue.

Thes following are several examples of “The Lie of Consensus”, confirming the statement of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, who is reported to have said: "Whoever claims consensus has lied."

The Muwatta of Imam Malik: The Most Authentic Book After the Qur'an
Let's start with the statement:

"Sahih al-Bukhari is the most authentic book after the Book of Allah."

Many scholars deceive us into believing that all the classical and contemporary jurists and scholars believed in this statement. However, the truth is far from this, as many scholars believe that the Muwatta of Imam Malik is the most authentic book after the Qur'an and that it is superior to Sahih al-Bukhari. They claim that no book compares to its honor or rank, and this is the view of a group of the great hadith scholars and jurists of this ummah. They hold that the Muwatta of Imam Malik is the most authentic book after the Book of Allah, and for them, it takes precedence over Sahih al-Bukhari and anything that follows it.

Imam al-Mutalibi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"There is no book on the face of the earth after the Book of Allah more authentic than the Book of Malik."

In another narration: "There is no book on the face of the earth more aligned with the Qur'an than the Book of Malik."

Another version says:

"There is no book after the Book of Allah more correct than the Muwatta of Malik,"

and in another,

"There is no book more beneficial after the Muwatta." (Sharh al-Imam al-Zarqani on the Muwatta, 1/8. Also, *Tazyeen al-Malakib bi Manqab al-Imam Malik* by al-Suyuti, printed with the *Al-Mudawwana al-Kubra*, p. 43).

In an article from the Azhar Forum, Sheikh Muhammad al-‘Amrawi al-Maliki is quoted as saying:

"One person – who shows no interest in the Muwatta, only studied it briefly without considering it critically – claimed that the statement of al-Shafi‘i regarding the Muwatta was made before Imam Bukhari authored his Sahih*. The response to this is that many of the prominent scholars continued to follow al-Shafi‘i's position on the Muwatta, indicating their acceptance of it, even after the emergence of Imam Bukhari’s* Sahih*."*

Al-Hafidh ibn Abd al-Barr (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "There is nothing like the Muwatta; no book surpasses it after..."

These quotes and the title of this section, "The Lie of Consensus," support the statement of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, who is reported to have said: "Whoever claims consensus has lied."

Al-Muwatta of Imam Malik is the Most Authentic Book after the Book of Allah:

Let us begin with the saying,

"Sahih al-Bukhari is the most authentic book after the Book of Allah."

Many scholars mislead us by claiming that all the early and later jurists and scholars believe in this statement. In reality, this is far from the truth. Many scholars believe that *Al-Muwatta* is the most authentic book after the Book of Allah, and they prefer it by far over *Sahih al-Bukhari*, saying that there is no comparison in honor or status between them. This view is held by a group of the greatest hadith scholars and jurists of this nation, who see that *Al-Muwatta* of Imam Malik is the most authentic book after the Book of Allah. To these scholars, it is ranked above *Sahih al-Bukhari* and other books.

Imam al-Mutalibi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"There is no book on the face of the earth after the Book of Allah more authentic than the book of Malik."

And in another wording:

"There is no book on the face of the earth closer to the Qur'an than the book of Malik."

And in another narration:

"After the Book of Allah, *Al-Muwatta* is the most accurate."

And again:

"After the Book of Allah, Al-Muwatta *is the most beneficial."* (*Sharh al-Imam al-Zarqani on Al-Muwatta*, 1/8; *Tazyeen al-Mamalik* by Al-Suyuti, published with *Al-Mudawwana al-Kubra*, p. 43).

It was reported in the Al-Azhari Forum, quoting Sheikh Muhammad al-'Amrawi al-Maliki, that one of them, who does not give due attention to *Al-Muwatta* and merely studies it without a fair perspective, said:

"The saying of al-Shafi'i about Al-Muwatta *was before Imam al-Bukhari compiled his* Sahih*."*

The reply to this is:

"Many of the leading imams continued to affirm the statement of al-Shafi'i regarding Al-Muwatta *and included it in their studies of hadith. This shows their acceptance and approval of it, even after the compilation of the* Sahih *of Imam al-Bukhari—may Allah have mercy on him."*

Al-Hafiz Ibn Abd al-Barr (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

*"*Al-Muwatta *has no equal, and there is no book above it after the Book of Allah."*

The Book of Allah – Glorified and Exalted:

Qadi Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi said:

"Know that – may Allah enlighten your hearts – the book of al-Ja'fi (meaning Sahih al-Bukhari*) is the second most authoritative source in this field, while* Al-Muwatta *is the first and the core. The rest, like al-Nasa'i (i.e.,* Sunan al-Nasa'i*) and al-Tirmidhi, come after them."* (*A'aridhat al-Ahwdhi*).

Many later scholars have followed this path, such as the famous hadith scholar Muhammad Habibullah al-Shinqiti, the well-known hadith scholar Sheikh Salah al-Fallani, and the scholar Wali Allah al-Dihlawi. They elaborated on this view, and here is a summary of what they said: "The first class of hadith books, based on a careful study, consists of three books: *Al-Muwatta* and the two Sahihs. The scholars of hadith have agreed that all that is contained in *Al-Muwatta* is authentic according to the opinion of Imam Malik and those who agree with him. As for the opinion of others, there is no narration in it that is broken or interrupted, except that its chain of transmission has been confirmed by other sources. Therefore, it is undoubtedly correct from this perspective." (*Hujjat Allah al-Baligha*, 1/385).

Further, it was stated: "I am now fully convinced, with certainty, that *Al-Muwatta* is the most authentic book on the face of the earth after the Book of Allah – Glorified and Exalted." (*Muqaddima al-Muwatta* by Imam Malik, 1/29).

However, there was an objection regarding the claim that *Sahih al-Bukhari* was the first to compile a purely authentic collection of hadith. This view was followed by many, including Ibn al-Salah (may Allah have mercy on him), who accepted it in many other matters related to this noble science.

It was also narrated by Bukhari himself, as mentioned in his book *Ilm al-Hadith* by Ibn al-Salah, where it states: "We have narrated from Abu Abdullah al-Bukhari – the author of the *Sahih* – that he said: 'The most authentic chain of narrators is that of Malik from Nafi' from Ibn Umar.'" Imam Abu Mansur Abdul Qahir al-Tamimi also built upon this and said that the best of chains is: "Al-Shafi'i from Malik from Nafi' from Ibn Umar." He cited the consensus of the hadith

scholars who agreed that no one among the narrators of Malik was superior to al-Shafi‘i; may Allah be pleased with them all. And Allah knows best.

Moreover, some scholars prioritize the chain of narration of *Sahih al-Bukhari* and its authenticity, emphasizing the excellence of its narrators like Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

I saw Abu Zur‘a and Abu Hatim presenting *Muslim* as being more knowledgeable in the science of *Sahih* than the scholars of their time. (*Tareekh Baghdad*, 13/101-102). As everyone knows, *Muslim* was a contemporary of Bukhari and even a student of his.

I found a comprehensive article on a Sudanese forum which firmly affirms, beyond any doubt, that the claim of the unanimous acceptance of *Sahih al-Bukhari* by the entire Muslim community is a falsehood—one falsehood after another. The article, titled: "The Refutation of the Claim that the Ummah has Consensus on Bukhari and Muslim," is summarized as follows:

"Some later scholars claim that all the scholars of the Ummah are in unanimous agreement on the authenticity of all that Bukhari and Muslim have reported. However, this is not the case, and it must be known that there are hadiths in both *Sahihs* that have been declared weak by numerous hadith scholars. There has never been a consensus on the authenticity of every hadith in the *Sahihs*, neither before nor after Bukhari and Muslim. Some of those who criticized certain hadiths include Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ali ibn al-Madini, Yahya ibn Ma‘in, Abu Dawood al-Sijistani, Bukhari himself (who weakened a hadith according to Muslim), Abu Hatim, Abu Zur‘a al-Razi, Abu ‘Isa al-Tirmidhi, al-Aqili, al-Nasa’i, Abu Ali al-Nisaburi, Abu Bakr al-Isma’ili, Abu Nu‘aim al-Asbahani, Abu al-Husayn al-Daraqutni, Ibn Manda, al-Bayhaqi, al-‘Aqili, al-Ghassani al-Jiyani, Abu al-Fadl al-Harawi, Ibn ‘Ammaar al-Shahid, Ibn al-Jawzi, Ibn Hazm, Ibn Abd al-Barr, Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, al-Albani, and many others. Are all these scholars innovators and followers of a path other than that of the believers?!"

Al-‘Aqili weakened many hadiths from Sahih al-Bukhari. For example, the hadith of Humam ibn Yahya in *Al-Abrar* was also cited by al-Aqili in his *Weak Hadiths* (4/369), where he pointed out that it was weak according to Bukhari’s chain. He also criticized it based on the testimony of ‘Ubaid ibn ‘Amir. Despite the fact that Bukhari and Muslim themselves classified it as *sahih* (Bukhari 3/1276 #3277 and Muslim 4/2275 #2963).

Some of the notable scholars such as al-Islam al-Darqutni, Ibn Qayyim, and al-Fadhil al-Harawi declared certain narrations to be rejected, even though they were recorded in *Sahih* collections. This was also followed by Sheikh Ibn Jibreen and Sheikh Ibn Uthaymeen in their lectures, who weakened some hadiths from *Sahih Muslim* as well.

Scholars Who Weakened Hadiths in the Two Sahihs:

The issue does not lie solely in the disagreement over which books of heritage are the most authentic. Every group claims that their book is the most superior, and strangely enough, each group considers their book to be "the most authentic after the Book of Allah." Everyone is fixated on comparing the absolute Book of Allah with human-authored books... Therefore, the issue does not end with these debates, but it has extended to the point where numerous scholars and renowned figures—who are acknowledged for their expertise in the "science" of hadith and for their unparalleled knowledge in critiquing narrators—have arrived at the point of criticizing hadiths found in *Sahih Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*. Yet, no one, neither earlier scholars nor later ones, has ever declared them to be heretics or deviants, nor have they described them as misguided or astray. However, after this book, we will likely find many scholars and their followers who will accuse us of the worst labels that describe us in the most unpleasant terms, and many of them will rise to accuse us of heresy and impure intentions. We seek refuge in Allah from what we will find from them.

Now, I will mention some of the prominent names who criticized hadiths in the *Sahihs* from different times and places following the compilation of these two books, according to their scholars. This will allow the reader to see how much of a myth this "legend" really is, and how hollow and irrelevant it is.

1. Criticism of Bukhari on Some Hadiths Reported by Muslim:

One of the criticisms is that Bukhari declared certain hadiths weak, which Muslim had considered authentic. For example:

- The hadith about the creation of the earth, which Muslim (2789) reported as authentic, Bukhari declared weak in his *History* (1317).
- The hadith about Sufyan ibn ‘Uyayna’s narration regarding the Prophet's prohibition of three divorces by Umm Salama after he married her, which was reported by Muslim (1460), was also declared weak by Bukhari in his *History* (93).
- The hadith about the slave of Ibn Abbas during the Hajj of the child (1336) was criticized by Bukhari in his *History* (612).

Additionally, Bukhari left out certain hadiths where there were differences, although Muslim had included them. For example, the hadith concerning the "triple divorce" (1472). Al-Bayhaqi mentioned this in his *Al-Kubra*.

(:14974) This hadith is one of the cases where Bukhari and Muslim disagreed. Muslim reported it, while Bukhari omitted it. I believe that Bukhari omitted it because it conflicted with other narrations from Ibn Abbas.

Likewise, the hadith regarding the prayer of eight rak'ahs in four prostrations (908) and others—Bukhari said in his commentary on al-Tirmidhi's *Sahih* (97): "The most authentic narration for me about the prayer of two rak'ahs is four rak'ahs in four prostrations." Ibn Taymiyyah, in his *Majmu' al-Fatawa* (236/17), commented: "Bukhari and Muslim both protect themselves from such mistakes, as when an error occurs in some narrations, they mention the preserved narrations that correct the erroneous ones."

This also includes the instances where Bukhari did not accept narrators that Muslim did, such as Sahl ibn Abi Salih, Hammad ibn Salamah, Abu Zubair, and others. Additionally, Bukhari's criteria for accepting narrations on hearing (from contemporaries) differed from Muslim's, and this difference is well-known.

2. Muslim's Criticism of Some of What Bukhari Reported:

One example is the *Isra'* hadith, narrated by Sharik ibn Abdullah (3570). Muslim criticized it, saying: "He has added something, changed the order, and made some omissions." Another point is that Muslim did not accept narrators who Bukhari relied on, such as Ikrimah, the freed slave of Ibn Abbas, and others. He also criticized Bukhari's condition for hearing from contemporaries. In this regard, Abu al-Walid al-Baji (d. 474 H) mentions in his book *Al-Tadlil wa al-Tajrih* (1/310):

"Bukhari narrated hadiths that he believed were authentic, but Muslim did not accept them, thinking them otherwise. Similarly, Muslim narrated hadiths that he believed were authentic, but Bukhari did not include them because of his different judgment. This shows that the matter is based on ijtihad (independent reasoning), and such scholars are very few."

3. Abu Zar'ah al-Razi's (d. 264 H) Criticism of Muslim's *Sahih*:

Abu Zar'ah criticized the compilation of Muslim's *Sahih* and spoke about some of its narrators and hadiths. Al-Barzakhī mentioned in his *Questions* (Abu Zar'ah's efforts, 674):

"Abu Zar'ah had been critical of the *Sahih* book compiled by Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj. He once said to me about the *Sahih* compilation of Muslim: 'These people wanted to advance before their time, so they did something that they were proud of. They compiled a book...'"

"They did not precede him in this, to establish for themselves leadership before its time." One day, a man came to him with a copy of *Sahih Muslim*, and I was a witness. The man began looking through it, and when he came across a hadith from Al-Asbat ibn Nadr, Abu Zar'ah said to me: "What's this in the *Sahih*? He includes Al-Asbat ibn Nadr in his book!" Then, he saw in the book a narration from Qattan ibn Nusayr, and he said to me: "This is worse than the first! Qattan ibn Nusayr has narrated hadiths from Thabit ibn Qays and attributed them to As-Sa'id." He looked at the book again and said: "He narrates from Ahmad ibn 'Isa al-Masri in his *Sahih*." Abu Zar'ah then said to me: "What I've seen in Egypt is that there is no one who doubts that Ahmad ibn 'Isa...," and he gestured with his hand to his tongue, as if to say: "Lies!" He continued: "He narrates from such people, yet leaves out narrators like Muhammad ibn 'Ajlan and others! And then he opens the door for the innovators among us, so they find the way to say, 'This is not in the *Sahih*.'"

I saw him criticizing and admonishing the book. When I returned to Nishapur the second time, I mentioned to Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj Abu Zar'ah's rejection of his narration in the book regarding Al-Asbat ibn Nadr, Qattan ibn Nusayr, and Ahmad ibn 'Isa al-Masri. Muslim replied to me: "I only said it is *Sahih*, and I included from the narrations of Al-Asbat, Qattan, and Ahmad only what the trustworthy narrators have related from their sheikhs. However, sometimes, there may be a chain from them that is weak, and I take it only from those who are more trustworthy than them, so I rely on the first narrators. The narrations are well-known from the reliable narrators."

Abu Zar'ah Criticizing Four Hadiths Reported by Muslim in his *Sahih* Bukhari:

1. The hadith of Ibn Umar, "I saw the Prophet in the shade of the Ka'bah" (6272). He criticized it as found in *Al-'Ilal* of Ibn Abi Hatim (386).
2. The hadith of Ibn Abbas regarding Jibril on the Day of Badr (3995, 4041). He criticized it as found in *Al-'Ilal* of Ibn Abi Hatim (921).

4. Abu Hatim's Criticism [Died 277 AH] of Hadiths Reported by the Two Shaykhs:

1. The hadith about the greeting of Ibn Mas'ud to the Prophet during the prayer (Bukhari 1199, Muslim 53). He criticized it as found in *Al-'Ilal* of his son (274).
2. The hadith about Abu Huraira fasting three days of every month (Bukhari 1178, 1981; Muslim 721). He criticized it as found in *Al-'Ilal* of his son (690).
3. The hadith of Zubayda bint al-Zubayr (Bukhari 5089, Muslim 1207). He criticized it as found in *Al-'Ilal* of his son (803).
4. The hadith of Jundub regarding: "Recite the Qur'an in what your hearts are unified on" (Bukhari 5060, Muslim 2667). He criticized it as found in *Al-'Ilal* of his son (1675).
5. The hadith of Ibn Amr saying: "Do not be like so-and-so" (Muslim 1159). He criticized it as found in *Al-'Ilal* of his son (344).

6. The hadith of Yunus ibn Yazid that the Prophet prayed two rak'ahs in Mina (Bukhari 1655). He criticized it as found in *Al-'Ilal* of Ibn Abi Hatim (40).
7. The hadith of Muhammad ibn Amr ibn Ata regarding the description of the Prophet's prayer (Bukhari 82). He criticized it as found in *Al-'Ilal* of his son (461).
8. The hadith of Abu Bakr ibn 'Ayyash regarding the i'tikaf in Ramadan (Bukhari 2044, 499). He criticized it as found in *Al-'Ilal* of his son (673).
9. The hadith of Ibn Umar, "I saw the Prophet in the shade of the Ka'bah" (Bukhari 6272). He criticized it as found in *Al-'Ilal* of his son (864).

5. Al-Tirmidhi's Criticism [Died 279 AH] of a Hadith in *Sahih Bukhari*:

Bukhari reported a hadith from Ibn Mas'ud regarding the act of istinja' (cleaning after using the toilet) with stones during the Hajj (156). Al-Tirmidhi criticized it for its *ishtirab* (confusion), stating in his *Al-'Ilal* (17): "This hadith contains confusion." He further mentioned that despite the hadith being confused, Bukhari leaned toward favoring certain narrations and included them in his *Sahih*, stating in his *Al-'Ilal al-Kabir* and in *Al-Sunan*.

The hadith about wiping over the khuffs (leather socks) and head coverings (275). He criticized it as found in *Al-'Ilal* of Ibn Abi Hatim (12).

1. The hadith that the Prophet would remember Allah in all circumstances (373). He criticized it as found in *Al-'Ilal* of Ibn Abi Hatim (124).

2. The hadith about the heels being dragged in the fire (240). He criticized it as found in *Al-'Ilal* of Ibn Abi Hatim (17).

3. The hadith is about the one who relieves a believer from the distress of this world (2699). He criticized it as found in *Al-'Ilal* of Ibn Abi Hatim (1979).

Abu Zar'ah Criticizing Hadiths Reported by Bukhari:

One such hadith is that of Yunus ibn Yazid where he narrates that the Prophet prayed two rak'ahs at Mina (1655). Abu Zar'ah criticized this as found in *Al-'Ilal* of Ibn Abi Hatim (40).

Abu Zar'ah's Criticism of Hadiths Reported by Muslim and Bukhari:

1. The hadith of Ibn Umar, "I saw the Prophet in the shade of the Ka'bah" (6272). He criticized it as found in *Al-'Ilal* of Ibn Abi Hatim (386).
2. The hadith of Ibn Abbas regarding Jibril on the Day of Badr (3995, 4041). He criticized it as found in *Al-'Ilal* of Ibn Abi Hatim (921).

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"Any person who says:

'*It is as if he has narrated the hadith of Zuhri, and that the hadith of Zuhri is authentic, and he placed the hadith of Zuhri in the book of the (collection),' should be aware that the narration of Isra'il is from the chain of Rabi' bin Subayh, from Abu Ishaq, from Abu 'Abd Allah, from the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). This is something that is known to me and is authentic.*

I say: It appears from what we narrated from the two Shaykhs, Al-Razi, and Al-Tirmidhi—who were contemporaries, and may Allah have mercy on them all—that there was no acceptance of the authenticity of what this one or that one deemed authentic. Rather, their approach was to criticize and examine the hadith that had any flaw, no matter who its narrator was. Therefore, no one can claim the consensus of the Imams in the era of the two Shaykhs regarding the authenticity of what they narrated in their books. This is contradicted by their statements, as we have shown. Thus, the only possibility remains that this consensus was established after the time of these Imams. If this is the case, what is the era in which the scholars agreed on this before Ibn Tahrir Al-Maqdisi?"

The criticism of Ibn Ammar, the martyr (d. 317 AH), regarding the authenticity of Sahih Muslim:

Abu Al-Fadl Ibn Ammar, the martyr, was one of the earliest to critique Sahih Muslim. He compiled the hadiths he criticized in a section titled "The Defects of the Hadiths in Sahih Muslim by Al-Hajjaj ibn Muslim." In this work, Ibn Ammar pointed out thirty-six hadiths that were narrated by Muslim in his Sahih, which he deemed problematic.

6. **The criticism of Abu Bakr Al-Isma'ili (d. 371 AH) regarding a hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari:**

Al-Bukhari narrated in his Sahih a hadith from Abu Huraira, in which Ibrahim (Abraham) will meet his father Azar on the Day of Judgment (3350). Al-Isma'ili criticized it when he included it in his Mustakhraj. Ibn Hajar mentioned in Fath (8/500): "Al-Isma'ili questioned this hadith regarding its chain of transmission and criticized its authenticity. He said after narrating it: 'This report raises concerns regarding its authenticity because Ibrahim knew that Allah does not break His promises. So how could he make his father's fate a source of disgrace, knowing this!'"

7. **The criticism of Al-Daraqutni (d. 385 AH) regarding the hadiths of the two Shaykhs:**

Al-Daraqutni is well-known for his authority in this field. He mentioned his critiques in three of his works:

1. **Al-Tatabu'** (The Pursuit): He states in the introduction (p. 120): "I began by mentioning the hadiths with defects that are found in the books of Al-Bukhari and Muslim, or one of them, and I clarified their defects and the correct version of them."
2. **Bayyan Ahadith Awda'a'ha Al-Bukhari Fi Kitabihi Al-Sahih** (A Section Clarifying the Hadiths That Al-Bukhari Included in His Sahih): He says in the introduction (p. 39): "I have made clear the hadiths which are included by Imam Muhammad bin Isma'il Al-Bukhari, may Allah have mercy on him, in his book 'Al-

Sunan Al-Sahih,' and the discrepancies in some of its chains of narration, its narrators, its transmission, and the integrity or defects of its narrators."

3. **Al-'Ilal Al-Wāridah fi Al-Ahadith Al-Nabawiyyah** (Defects in the Prophetic Hadiths): In this work, he extensively discusses the defects in the hadiths.

It should be noted that Al-Daraqutni, in his critiques, did not claim to have covered all the defects in the hadiths narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim, nor did he intend to exhaustively address them. He mentioned in his section on Al-Bukhari hadiths that were not found in his *Al-Tatabu'*, and in his *Al-'Ilal* book, he mentioned hadiths not found in either of the previous two works.

8. The agreement of Abu Muṣ'ūd Al-Dimashqi (d. 401 AH) with some of Al-Daraqutni's criticisms:

Abu Muṣ'ūd wrote a book titled *"Al-Ajwabah 'Amma Ashkala 'Ala Shaykh Al-Daraqutni 'Ala Sahih Muslim Ibn Al-Hajjaj"* (The Answers to What Was Difficult for Shaykh Al-Daraqutni in Sahih Muslim by Al-Hajjaj), in which he defended the hadiths criticized by Al-Daraqutni in Sahih Muslim. However, he acknowledged some of Al-Daraqutni's criticisms and accepted them, offering an apology on behalf of Imam Muslim.

Here is an interesting point: If there had been an absolute consensus from the Ummah regarding the authenticity of all that the two Shaykhs (Al-Bukhari and Muslim) had narrated, Abu Muṣ'ūd would have been obligated to accept this and would not have needed to respond to Al-Daraqutni's objections. However, he agreed with some of these criticisms.

9. The criticism of Ibn Hazm (d. 456 AH) regarding two hadiths in the two Sahihs:

Ibn Hazm was a great admirer of the two Sahihs, but he nevertheless criticized two hadiths in them and declared one of them to be fabricated (mawdu'[12]). The first hadith in question is the hadith of the Isra' (Night Journey).

The hadith that was narrated by Al-Bukhari and criticized by Muslim as well. As for the second hadith: it is the hadith of Ibn Abbas, where the Muslims were not looking at Abu Sufyan, which was narrated by Muslim (2501). Ibn Hazm ruled it to be fabricated (mawdu').

Al-Nawawi mentioned in his explanation (16/63): "Ibn Hazm said: 'This hadith is an error from some of the narrators, because there is no disagreement among people that the Prophet (peace be upon him) married Umm Habiba before the conquest, while she was in

[12] **mawdu'** (Arabic: موضوع) means **fabricated** or **forged**, especially in the context of a **hadith** (Prophetic tradition). It refers to a hadith that has been falsely attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and lacks authenticity due to issues in its chain of transmission (**isnad**) or content (**matn**).

Abyssinia, and her father was a disbeliever.'" In another narration attributed to Ibn Hazm, he also said: "It is fabricated."

The full statement of Ibn Hazm was narrated by Al-Humaydi about him (see: *Makanat al-Sahihayn*, p. 38).

10. **The criticism of Al-Ghassani Al-Jiyani (d. 498 AH) of the two Sahihs:**

Abu Ali Al-Ghassani Al-Jiyani, who was the head of the hadith scholars in Cordoba, authored a book titled *Taqyid al-Muhmal wa Tamyeez al-Mushkil* (The Restriction of the Neglected and the Distinction of the Ambiguous). In this work, he pointed out various errors in the two Sahihs, each individually, most of which were directed towards the narrators of these books. He followed the footsteps of Al-Daraqutni and Abu Muṣ'ūd Al-Dimashqi in some of their critiques of the two Shaykhs, and added his own criticisms that neither of the two had mentioned or alluded to.

It can be said that these scholars, who came after Ibn Taymiyyah, followed the methodology of the earlier scholars in addressing the defects in the hadiths, particularly those with disagreements in their chains of narration (asānīd) or texts (mutūn), even if they were included in the books of the two Shaykhs and deemed authentic by them. This indicates that the scholars of the era following the two Shaykhs did not reach a consensus on the absolute authenticity of all hadiths in the two Sahihs, nor did they prohibit further scrutiny of their chains of narration. In fact, some of them authored entire books to highlight the defective hadiths among those reported in these works.

The crucial point here is: If it is established that some hadiths in the two Sahihs have been subject to differences of opinion among the imams regarding their authenticity, how can what Ibn Taymiyyah claimed— that the Muslims are unanimously agreed upon the authenticity of everything the two Shaykhs reported in their books—be correct? Especially since the views of these scholars are well-known and their disagreements are publicly acknowledged.

No scholar has ever accused them of opposing an alleged consensus. Imam Ahmad, in his *Musā'il* (reported by his son Abdullah, 1587), said:

"Whoever claims consensus on this is lying. Whoever claims consensus is lying; perhaps..."

The people have disagreed. This is a claim made by Bishr al-Marisi and al-Asam. However, it is said that one does not know whether the people have disagreed, or if that has not reached him, or if he has not been informed of it. Therefore, he says that he does not know whether the people have disagreed. Thus, even if he knows that there is a disagreement on the issue, it is not permissible for him to claim consensus, especially if he has already come across the disagreement.

11. Criticism of Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim regarding a hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari:

Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim both criticized a hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari. They judged the phrase "Allah creates for it a creation and settles them in it" as strange (nukara), even though it appears in the Sahih. They were followed by Sheikh Ibn Jibreen and Ibn Uthaymeen in their lectures.

12. Ibn Burhan (d. 514 AH), who preceded Ibn al-Salah:

He says in his book *"Al-Wusul ila al-Usool"* (2/172):

"The report of a single narrator does not provide knowledge, contrary to what some of the companions of hadith claim. They believed that what was narrated by Muslim and al-Bukhari is definitively authentic. Our position is that if knowledge could be obtained through such narrations, it would have been available to all people, just like knowledge from mutawatir reports. Moreover, al-Bukhari is not infallible in his transmission, so we cannot assert his narrations as unquestionably authentic. The scholars of hadith and of knowledge have pointed out errors in the works of Muslim and al-Bukhari. If their claims were indisputably true, such mistakes would not have occurred." Then he added:

"There is no reliance on the claim of consensus except that the Ummah has universally accepted the reception of these two books, and they all agree to act upon them. However, this does not indicate that they are categorically authentic. The Ummah acted upon them because of their trustworthiness and reliability in narrations. Not everything that is acted upon is necessarily absolutely authentic."

This opinion was also cited by al-Nawawi in his response to Ibn al-Salah.

13. Badr al-Din al-Zarkashi (d. 794 AH):

It appears from al-Zarkashi's critiques in his "Nukat" on Ibn al-Salah that he agreed with him on the definitiveness of the hadiths in the two Sahihs. However, in his encyclopedic work on the fundamentals, he responded to Ibn al-Salah.

He said in his book *Al-Bahr al-Muhit* (4/246):

"Ibn al-Salah said: 'Everything agreed upon by al-Bukhari and Muslim is certain in its authenticity, because the scholars agreed on the correctness of these two books.' The truth is, this is not the case. The agreement only occurred regarding the permissibility of acting upon what is in them, which does not negate that what is in them is only presumed to be authentic. For Allah Almighty did not obligate us to certainty. Therefore, one must judge based on the evidence, even if it only leads to presumption."

14. Al-Kamal Ibn al-Humam (d. 861 AH):

He said in his book *Fath al-Qadeer* (1/445):

"Those who say: 'The most authentic hadiths are those in the two Sahihs, then what is exclusive to al-Bukhari, then what is exclusive to Muslim, then what contains both of their conditions from others, and then what contains the condition of one of them,' are making a claim that cannot be blindly followed. For authenticity is not determined by whether the narrators meet the conditions they established."

He also said in the same book (243/5) regarding the hadith of a single narrator:

"Whoever thought it would become definitive and claimed that what was narrated by al-Bukhari was definitive, made a mistake." He further stated (495/5): "We have repeatedly emphasized that the fact that a hadith is in the book of al-Bukhari does not make it more authentic than a hadith in another book, assuming that both have similar narrators."

15. Muhammad bin Suleiman al-Kafiji (d. 879 AH):

In his book *Al-Mukhtasar fi Ilm al-Athar* (p. 167), he said:

"There is an agreement among scholars that the authenticity of hadith is based on presumption of authenticity, and its soundness is contingent upon whether it is mutawatir or not, contrary to the opinion of some, due to its lack of mutawatir status."

He further noted that the claim of authenticity based on consensus should not be relied upon, as it doesn't prove certainty.

16. Ahmad bin al-Siddiq al-Ghumari (d. 1380 AH = 1960 CE):

He said in his book *Al-Mughīr 'ala al-Ahadith al-Mawdu'ah fi al-Jami' al-Saghir* (p. 137):

"How many hadiths have the scholars authenticated, while they are invalid when considered in light of their meaning and contradiction with the Qur'an, the authentic Sunnah, or historical facts? This is due to the possibility of error and falsehood entering into those known for their integrity and sometimes even intentional lies! The fame of integrity does not provide certainty in reality. Among these are the hadiths in the two Sahihs, for some of them are certainly false. So, do not be deceived by that or hesitate to rule them as fabricated based on the false claim of consensus on the authenticity of what is found in them. For this claim is baseless and does not stand up to scrutiny, as the consensus on the authenticity of all the hadiths in the two Sahihs is neither rational nor actual."

17. Al-Albani (d. 1420 AH = 1999 CE):

Al-Albani faced criticism from Mahmoud Saeed Douh for criticizing some hadiths in the *Sahihs*, and for this, Douh considered Al-Albani to be in opposition to consensus. Mahmoud Saeed said in his book *Tanbeeh al-Muslim* (p. 7):

"When the Sahihs were compiled, the pens were lifted from the hadiths in the two Sahihs, and if the entire Ummah had agreed on their authenticity, they would not have gone astray!"

Al-Albani responded in the introduction of his book *Adab al-Zifaf* (p. 54 and onwards), after quoting this statement:

"I said: This statement alone should be enough for any intelligent reader to recognize the ignorance of this self-proclaimed scholar and his slander against the early and later scholars in claiming such consensus. For they have always criticized hadiths in the two Sahihs that seemed to them to be subject to criticism, regardless of whether they were right or wrong in doing so."

He then mentioned the criticism by Abdullah bin al-Siddiq al-Ghumari of two hadiths in the *Sahihs*. Al-Albani followed this by quoting his brother Ahmad bin al-Siddiq al-Ghumari, agreeing with him, and stating (p. 60):

"I said: There is no doubt in this for any serious researcher in this field, and I had mentioned something similar in the introduction of Rushh al-Tahawiyya."

Then Al-Albani responded to the claim that the Ummah would have gone astray, saying (p. 63):

"I say: No, certainly not. The Ummah has not gone astray and will not go astray by the permission of Allah Almighty. Rather, it is those who fabricate and attribute consensus to the Ummah on a matter they are divided over."

So, can it still be said that there is consensus on *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*?

I believe that after what we have presented, quoted from the "Sudan Forum," no rational person could deny all these reports from distinguished scholars across different regions and times and continue to believe in the lie of consensus that everything in *Sahih al-Bukhari* is authentic, and repeat it as fact.

Bukhari is criticized and regarded as unreliable in hadith

The matter regarding the consideration of *Sahih al-Bukhari* as the most authentic book after the Book of Allah, and the supposed weakening of some hadiths within *Sahih al-Bukhari*, was a point of concern for some of the greatest scholars in the field of *ilm al-hadith*. They went as far as to criticize Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari himself, considering him to be unreliable and his hadiths to be disregarded. Many people who do not delve into the depths of these matters may be shocked when confronted with these facts, which some scholars attempt to hide. They only repeat the glorified tales about al-Bukhari while concealing the bitter truths that contradict their narratives.

Among those who criticized al-Bukhari was the famous scholar al-Dhahabi, who mentions in *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'* (Volume 12, p. 462):

"Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Hatim said in his work 'Al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil': Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari was born in 194 AH, and he narrated hadiths from his father and from 'Azra'ah. However, they abandoned his narration when it was reported to them that he said that the Qur'an is created."

Al-Dhahabi commented on this by saying:

"I say: Whether they abandoned his narration or not, al-Bukhari is trustworthy, reliable, and used as a source in the Islamic world."

Ibn Khalkan said:

"Muhammad ibn Yahya, known as al-Dhuhli, was one of the great scholars and hadith narrators. His fame spread widely. He was the teacher of al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasa'i, and Ibn Majah." (*Wafayat al-A'yan* by Ibn Khalkan, 4/282, biography of al-Dhuhli)

Al-Kalabadhi, in his book *Al-Jam' Bayn Rijal al-Sahihayn* (The Compilation of the Narrators of the Two Sahihs), mentioned that al-Bukhari narrated from al-Dhuhli on various topics such as fasting, medicine, funerals, manumission, and many other matters in almost thirty instances.

"When al-Bukhari entered Nisapur, Muhammad ibn Yahya al-Dhuhli stirred up the issue of the creation of the Qur'an. Even though he had heard from him, al-Bukhari did not stop narrating from him, nor did he explicitly mention his name."

Al-Bukhari and the controversy over his beliefs:

The disagreement over the beliefs of Imam al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim regarding the creation of the Qur'an is central to the controversies surrounding their works. Ahmad ibn Hanbal's opinion on this matter is particularly noteworthy, as he took a firm stance against those who believed the Qur'an was created, declaring them to be disbelievers. In his book *Al-Sunnah* (3/53), he explicitly states:

"The Qur'an is the speech of Allah and is not created. Whoever claims that the Qur'an is created is a Jahmi disbeliever. Whoever affirms that the Qur'an is the speech of Allah but remains silent about whether it is created or uncreated is worse than the former, whoever says that the recitation of the Qur'an is created, but the Qur'an itself is the speech of Allah, is a Jahmi. Anyone who does not declare these people and the proponents of the creation of the Qur'an to be disbelievers is like them – a disbeliever."

In his *Tareekh Baghdad* (2/31), al-Khatib al-Baghdadi reports that al-Bukhari held a belief contrary to the majority of theologians of his time, asserting that the Qur'an was created. Upon arriving in Nisapur, Muhammad ibn Yahya al-Dhuhli, a prominent scholar of the time, issued a fatwa against him, stating that no one should attend al-Bukhari's gatherings unless they agreed with his views. This stance led to the rejection of al-Bukhari's teachings by several scholars in Baghdad and Nisapur, further exacerbated by the doctrinal disagreements regarding the nature of the Qur'an.

Additionally, al-Dhahabi in *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala* (Volume 12, p. 465) brings attention to a letter from Muhammad ibn Yahya to Baghdad, which reads:

"Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari says that the Qur'anic word is not ancient, and he has persisted in this belief."

This statement further reflects the theological conflict that surrounded al-Bukhari, leading to his ostracism in certain regions, particularly for his view on the createdness[13] of the Qur'an.

Moreover, al-Dhuhli's concerns extended not only to al-Bukhari but also to Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj (the compiler of *Sahih Muslim*). According to scholars like al-Dhahabi, both al-Bukhari and Muslim faced rejection in regions such as Nisapur and Baghdad, primarily because of their controversial beliefs about the Qur'an's nature. Their stance was considered a deviation from the orthodox creed, resulting in their exclusion from some scholarly circles.

[13] **"createdness"** refers to the state or quality of being created, as opposed to being eternal or uncreated. In Islamic theology, this concept often arises in discussions about the nature of God, the Qur'an, and the metaphysical distinctions between Creator and creation.

In conclusion, the criticism of al-Bukhari and Muslim for their views on the Qur'an's creation is an important historical issue. The controversy over their beliefs and the subsequent actions taken by scholars in rejecting them highlights the complexity and divisiveness of theological debates in early Islamic scholarship.

Al-Bukhari's Criticism and the Role of Al-Dhahli:

The controversy surrounding Imam al-Bukhari's beliefs and his relationship with key scholars of his time is significant in the history of hadith. It is reported that the famous hadith scholar al-Dhahli**,** who was a prominent figure in the transmission and preservation of hadith, expressed strong opposition to al-Bukhari. Some scholars argue that this rejection was rooted in envy and personal rivalry rather than purely intellectual differences.

According to al-Dhahabi in *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala* (Vol. 12, p. 461), Ahmad ibn al-Sour from Shiraz narrates an incident in which al-Dhahli explicitly declared that al-Bukhari should not reside in his city. The story goes that after Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj and Ahmad ibn Hanbal left a gathering hosted by al-Dhahli, the latter stated:

"Do not let this man (al-Bukhari) live in the same town as me." This led to al-Bukhari leaving the city and traveling away.

This personal tension between al-Dhahli and al-Bukhari is commonly attributed to theological differences regarding the belief in the createdness of the Qur'an**.** Al-Bukhari's position on this issue was a source of significant contention, as his views were seen as unorthodox by certain scholars.

Al-Dhahli's Critique of Al-Bukhari's Beliefs:

Al-Dhahli's criticism went beyond the personal level. He was particularly critical of al-Bukhari's views on the Qur'an. It was claimed that al-Bukhari held the belief that the Qur'an was created**,** a stance that led to a theological dispute with other scholars, especially Ahmad ibn Hanbal**,** who held that the Qur'an is eternal and uncreated. This theological divergence was the basis of much of the criticism directed towards al-Bukhari during his lifetime.

Al-Bukhari's Relationship with Abu Zar'a and the Criticism of His Work:

One of the most notable scholars who criticized al-Bukhari was Abu Zar'a al-Razi**,** an important hadith scholar and one of the leading figures in the science of hadith preservation. According to al-Khatib al-Baghdadi in *Tareekh Baghdad* (Vol. 2, p. 31), Abu Zar'a was not impressed by the works of al-Bukhari. He is reported to have said about the Sahih Muslim and its methodology:

"These are a group of people who sought to advance themselves prematurely, so they wrote something to promote themselves, creating books like Sahih Bukhari to establish their dominance before it was their time."

Abu Zar'a, upon reviewing al-Bukhari's *Sahih*, also raised doubts about the authenticity of some of the narrations in it. He is reported to have said regarding a narration by Asbat ibn Nasr**,** whom he found dubious:

"How far this is from being considered sahih! It doesn't belong in his book.**"** Later, he further criticized the inclusion of a narration from Qatan ibn Nasir, saying it was even worse than the previous one.

These critiques, particularly those from established hadith scholars like Abu Zar'a, reflect the deep divisions in the early hadith transmission community over the validity of certain narrations and the methodologies employed by compilers like al-Bukhari.

Theological and Methodological Disputes:

In summary, the criticism of al-Bukhari from scholars like al-Dhahli and Abu Zar'a al-Razi highlights significant theological and methodological differences regarding the authenticity of hadith. The accusation of envy against al-Dhahli and the doctrinal differences over the createdness of the Qur'an played a crucial role in these conflicts. Moreover, these early scholars' concerns about the preservation of the authenticity of hadith and the purity of doctrine led to heated debates that continue to shape the understanding of hadith literature in Islamic scholarship today.

The Criticism of Al-Bukhari:

The controversy surrounding Imam Al-Bukhari and the narrative of his authenticity in Islamic scholarship is complex and multifaceted. Many scholars throughout history have criticized aspects of his work and beliefs, challenging the idea of unquestionable consensus around his Sahih (authentic collection of hadith). While these critiques are often dismissed or overlooked by many traditional scholars, they shed light on the diverse perspectives that have existed throughout the centuries regarding al-Bukhari's methodology and the credibility of his work**.**

1. Al-Dhahabi's Account and the Role of Jealousy:

Al-Dhahabi in *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala* (Vol. 12, p. 461) refers to the criticism directed at al-Bukhari by his teacher al-Dhahli. He mentions that al-Dhahli accused al-Bukhari of using hadith compilation for personal advancement**,** calling it an attempt to "advance prematurely" by writing books like Sahih al-Bukhari**.** This criticism is seen by some as stemming from envy and rivalry between the two scholars, rather than solely based on intellectual grounds.

Al-Dhahabi also acknowledges the widespread belief among certain scholars that the issue was less about methodology and more about Sahih Al-Bukhari., where al-Dhahli's personal jealousy played a significant role in rejecting al-Bukhari.

2. Abu Zar'a al-Razi's Critique:

Abu Zar'a al-Razi**,** a prominent hadith scholar, was also one of the leading critics of al-Bukhari's work. According to al-Khatib al-Baghdadi in *Tareekh Baghdad* (Vol. 2, p. 31), Abu Zar'a criticized the Sahih al-Bukhari when he reviewed it and found issues with some of the narrations included. He specifically rejected certain hadiths that al-Bukhari included, particularly one related to the narration of Asbat ibn Nasr and Qatan ibn Nasir**,** which Abu Zar'a deemed weak and not in line with the standards of authentic narration.

Abu Zar'a's critique reflects a deep concern with the methodology behind Sahih al-Bukhari**,** suggesting that the criteria for authenticity that al-Bukhari used were either inconsistent or flawed in some instances.

3. Theological Disputes – The Creation of the Qur'an:

One of the primary theological disagreements that contributed to al-Bukhari's criticism was his stance on the createdness of the Qur'an**.** This issue was a major point of contention during the early centuries of Islam. Scholars like Ahmad ibn Hanbal strongly opposed the idea that the Qur'an could be created, maintaining that it is the eternal, uncreated word of God. On the other hand, al-Bukhari, along with other scholars, was accused of supporting the view that the Qur'an was created.

This belief was seen as heretical by some of his contemporaries, leading to significant tension between al-Bukhari and other leading scholars, particularly in regions like Nisapur and Baghdad, where the theological dispute was most heated.

4. Allegations of Heresy and Excommunication:

In some narratives, al-Dhahli and other scholars went as far as to accuse al-Bukhari of heresy and even excommunication (takfir [14]) due to his theological stance on the Qur'an. In these accounts, when al-Dhahli became aware of al-Bukhari's position on the Qur'an, he allegedly declared that al-Bukhari should not be allowed to live in the same town as him, and some even accused him of holding views that were close to Jahmiyyah (a sect accused of deviating from mainstream Sunni beliefs).

[14] Takfir is an Arabic term used in Islamic discourse to describe the act of declaring someone a *kafir* (unbeliever) or an apostate, which means declaring that they are outside the fold of Islam. This term is typically used by certain individuals or groups who believe that a Muslim has violated the core principles of Islam or engaged in actions that are considered to be in contradiction with Islamic teachings.

While these claims are disputed by those who defend al-Bukhari, they reflect the intensity of the theological debates that were central to his time.

5. The Myth of Consensus (Ijma'[15]):

One of the key points raised in this text is the myth of consensus (Ijma') surrounding al-Bukhari and his Sahih**.** The claim that there has been an unquestionable consensus on the authenticity of al-Bukhari's work is presented as an exaggerated and unsubstantiated myth. While many modern scholars continue to treat Sahih al-Bukhari as the most authoritative compilation of hadith, the historical record shows that there were significant disagreements and criticisms regarding both his methodology and his conclusions.

This "legend" of universal agreement around al-Bukhari's Sahih is criticized as being contrary **to** the historical and intellectual reality, where there has always been dissent and disagreement over various aspects of his work. The text argues that much of the reverence given to al-Bukhari and his work is based on unquestioning adherence to later scholars' opinions rather than solid historical or scientific evidence.

6. A Call for Critical Engagement:

Ultimately, the point of this argument is not to discredit Imam al-Bukhari entirely but to highlight that the idealization of his personality and the reification of his work as entirely infallible is both historically misleading and theologically problematic. The tradition of critical engagement with hadith literature has always been a fundamental aspect of Islamic scholarship, and this tradition of skepticism should not be abandoned in favor of blind reverence to any scholar, no matter how highly regarded.

In conclusion, this passage reflects the complexity and historical layers of debate surrounding al-Bukhari's legacy. It challenges the romanticized narratives about his status in Islamic scholarship and urges for a more nuanced, critical perspective on both his personal life and his methodological approach to hadith compilation.

[15] **Ijma'** (Arabic: إجماع) is an Arabic term in Islamic jurisprudence that refers to the consensus or agreement of Islamic scholars or the community on a particular issue, particularly in matters of law and religious practice. It is considered one of the primary sources of Islamic law, alongside the **Qur'an**, **Sunnah** (the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad), and **Qiyas** (analogical reasoning).

Bukhari Hadiths

I wanted to conclude this section with a selection of hadiths found in the book that is considered "the most authentic after the Book of Allah" – *Sahih al-Bukhari* – to allow the reader to grasp the extent of the harm caused to our religion and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as recorded in this book. It is essential to understand where terrorism in the name of Islam originates and why our community has arrived at the state it is in today. The reader must face the facts as they are, without embellishment or sugar-coating, and look beyond the justifications that serve the creation of a myth surrounding al-Bukhari, at the cost of religion.

We must confront the truth of what Sahih al-Bukhari, attributed to Sheikh Bukhari**,** has wrought upon the Ummah. Many who have only heard and followed the exaggerated, distorted, and fabricated stories surrounding al-Bukhari will be shocked when they discover the reality behind a large number of the terrible hadiths within this book. These hadiths are harmful to **Islam** and the Prophet of Islam**.** We will not present all of these hadiths but will suffice with just a few examples, which we believe are sufficient for any sincere seeker of the truth – and nothing but the truth.

1. **The Prophet Attempts Suicide:**

   In Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith number 6581, from the book "Al-Tafseer" in the chapter "The first revelation to the Prophet," it is narrated by Al-Zuhri, who quoted Urwah from Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), that she said:

   "... And the revelation was interrupted for a while, and during that time, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was deeply distressed. He tried repeatedly to climb a mountain in order to throw himself down. Every time he reached the top of a mountain, the angel Jibril would appear to him and say, 'O Muhammad, indeed you are the Messenger of Allah,' and that would reassure him, so he would return to his place."

   This hadith is found in the first book of Sahih al-Bukhari, and it suggests that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was deeply troubled during the period when the revelation stopped and had moments of intense despair. However, each time he contemplated ending his life, the angel Jibril appeared to him, reminding him of his status as the Messenger of Allah, which would calm him down and stop him from carrying out his thoughts.

   (Note: The translation and the understanding of these texts can vary, but this is a straightforward rendition of the Arabic text you provided.)

The attempt at suicide is not a sign of strength or rationality, but rather a result of psychological distress. How can it be acceptable for a Muslim to attribute such behavior to the Messenger (peace be upon him)? Despite the efforts of Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani and others to justify the narration in Sahih al-Bukhari regarding the Prophet's attempts at suicide, claiming that the additional phrase "in what has reached us" was an insertion by al-Zuhri, the fact remains that this interpretation is weak.

Even though this is a common defense, the falsehood against the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) is clear from this narration in Sahih al-Bukhari. However, those who revere the legend are not hesitant to claim that "everything in Sahih al-Bukhari is authentic."

2. The impolite Prophet:

6824 - Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Ju'fi narrated to us, from Wahb ibn Jarir, from his father, who said: I heard Ya'la ibn Hakim from Ikrimah, from Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both), who said: "Mā'iz ibn Mālik came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and he said to him: 'Perhaps you kissed, or fondled, or looked [at her]?' He replied: 'No, O Messenger of Allah.' He said: 'Did you have intercourse with her?' He did not use euphemism. He then ordered for his stoning."

This narration in Sahih al-Bukhari indicates that the Prophet was impolite, and that he used vulgar language. There is another narration where he said to a person: "The most honorable of you is your father." In another narration, he said, "Whoever adopts the practices of pre-Islamic ignorance, then tell him, 'May his father be cursed.'" There are also accounts where the Prophet (peace be upon him) cursed the believers, as in the narration from Abu Hurairah, where he said: "O Allah, if I have cursed any believer, then make that a means of drawing him closer to You on the Day of Judgment."

If Allah Almighty, in His divine wisdom, states in His Book that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had "great character," it is clear that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was the most disciplined, the most courteous, the most refined in manners, and the most elegant in speech. Yet, some people, who worship legends, prefer to believe in the distorted version of the Prophet that is presented in this hadith from Sahih al-Bukhari. They brazenly and disrespectfully describe this as "authentic" hadith.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said these words and commanded them. I would much prefer, a thousand times over, to attribute this vulgarity to the line of narration rather than to the Prophet (peace be upon him). I would also rule the hadith as fabricated and concocted.

3. The Prophet (peace be upon him) brought slaughter:

In Sahih al-Bukhari, a hadith attributed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) is mentioned where it is stated:

"I have come to you with slaughter."

In a time when we affirm the verse from Allah's Book,

“And We have not sent you except as a mercy to the worlds” (Al-Anbiya: 107)

This narration goes against the prevailing teachings, portraying our Prophet as violent and that he brought to slaughter. From this, the concept of jihad and all forms of terrorist imagery emerged from this religious heritage, which has been elevated to a level greater than the sanctity of Allah’s Book, which calls for love and mercy. People have substituted these narrations for the Book of Allah, which is free from falsehood from any direction.

What is strange is that the followers of these distorted traditions have tried to justify this hadith so as not to wrong the narrator, claiming that it was meant for the polytheists. They forget that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was sent as a mercy to the world, to all people, regardless of their affiliations or beliefs. They forget that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was the most merciful to the polytheists, disbelievers, and all those who disagreed with him, and he had many encounters with them. How can it then be attributed to him that he said, "I have come to you with slaughter"? But what can be said when we find Muslims who genuinely believe that the Prophet (peace be upon him) indeed uttered these words?

4. The Prophet dislikes people to be believers:

Bukhari and Muslim narrated from Umar ibn al-Khattab that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

"I have been commanded to fight the people until they testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and they establish the prayer and pay the zakat. When they do that, their lives and their wealth are safe from me, except by the right of Islam, and their reckoning is with Allah Almighty."

This is another offense attributed to our greatest Messenger because it is impossible for him to contradict the command of Allah in His Noble Book. In many verses, Allah Almighty has made clear the principles of mercy and peace. Here, we mention some of them. Allah (SWT) says:

“If your Lord had so willed, all those on earth would have believed together. Will you then compel mankind until they become believers?” (Yunus: 99)

“There is no compulsion in religion; truth has been made clear from falsehood. Whoever rejects false gods and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.” (Al-Baqarah: 256)

“And say, 'The truth is from your Lord. Whoever wills—let them believe, and whoever wills—let them disbelieve.' Indeed, we have prepared a fire for the wrongdoers whose walls will surround them. If they call for relief, they will be relieved with water like molten metal, which scalds faces. How dreadful the drink and how terrible a resting place!” (Al-Kahf: 29)

“So remind [them], you are only a reminder. You are not a controller over them. But whoever turns away and disbelieves, Allah will punish him with the greatest punishment. Surely, to Us is their return. Then indeed, upon Us is their reckoning.” (Al-Ghashiyah: 21-26)

“We are most knowing of what they say, and you are not a tyrant over them. So remind by the Quran whoever fears My warning.” (Qaf: 45)

All these clear verses demonstrate that Islam is a religion that advocates for choice in matters of faith, not compulsion or coercion. When did Allah command His Prophet to fight people over their beliefs? However, the worshippers of traditional idols (heritage) do not hesitate to attribute this violent rhetoric to the Prophet of love and mercy. Many people wonder why there are Western offenses against the Prophet, but the truth they don't realize is that these offenses are derived entirely from such texts, considered "the most authentic" and "flawless."

Among the narrations promoting hatred and coercion in religion is what is found in Sahih al-Bukhari under the chapter "Killing those who refuse the obligations," attributed to apostasy. For instance, hadith 6526 says:

“Yahya ibn Bukayr narrated to us from al-Layth, from Uqayl, from Ibn Shihab, who informed me from Ubaydullah ibn Abdullah ibn Utbah, that Abu Hurayrah said: When the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away and Abu Bakr assumed leadership, and some of the Arabs apostatized, Umar said to Abu Bakr, "How will you fight the people when the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: 'I have been commanded to fight the people until they say there is no god but Allah. Whoever says there is no god but Allah has protected his wealth and his life from me, except by the right of Islam, and his reckoning is with Allah'?" Abu Bakr replied, "By Allah, I will fight whoever separates prayer from zakat, for zakat is the due of wealth. By Allah, if they withheld even a young goat that they used to give to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), I would fight them for withholding it." Umar

then said, "By Allah, it was only when I saw that Allah had opened Abu Bakr's heart to fighting that I realized it was the truth."

These narrations are irreconcilable with Allah's clear and explicit command in His Book, which states that people are not to be coerced into embracing faith, as the essence of belief is choice, not compulsion. However, who listens when Sahih al-Bukhari has spoken?

5. The Prophet was bewitched and began to hallucinate:

In **Sahih al-Bukhari**, under Hadith number 5433, it is narrated:

‘'Ubayd ibn Isma'il narrated to us, Abu Usama narrated from Hisham, from his father, from 'Aisha, who said: "The Prophet (peace be upon him) was bewitched until he imagined that he was doing something when he had not done it. One day, while he was with me, he supplicated to Allah and kept praying. Then he said, 'O 'Aisha, do you know that Allah has answered me regarding what I asked Him about?' I said, 'What is that, O Messenger of Allah?' He said, 'Two men came to me; one sat at my head and the other at my feet. One of them said to the other, "What is the ailment of this man?" The other replied, "He has been bewitched." The first asked, "Who has bewitched him?" The other replied, "Labid ibn al-A'sam, a Jew from the tribe of Banu Zurayq." The first asked, "With what did he do it?" The other replied, "With a comb, hair from his comb, and the pollen of a male date palm." The first asked, "Where is it?" The other replied, "In the well of Dharwan.

So the Prophet (peace be upon him) went with some of his companions to the well, looked at it, and found that its water was like the infusion of henna[16] leaves, and its palm trees resembled the heads of devils. Then he returned to 'Aisha and said, 'By Allah, its water was as red as henna infusion, and its date palms looked like the heads of devils.'"

This narration portrays the Prophet (peace be upon him) as being affected by witchcraft to the extent that he would hallucinate and imagine actions he had not done. This is highly problematic when viewed in the context of his role as the Messenger of Allah, divinely protected and guided, and contradicts the Qur'anic descriptions of his impeccable character and sound judgment. The attribution of such incidents to the Prophet raises significant questions about the authenticity and implications of such reports.

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[16] **Henna** (Arabic: حِنَّاء, **ḥinnāʾ**) is a natural dye derived from the leaves of the **henna plant** (*Lawsonia inermis*). It has been used for thousands of years across various cultures for **cosmetic, medicinal, and ritualistic purposes**. Henna holds particular significance in Islamic, South Asian, Middle Eastern, and North African traditions.

Allah and continued praying. Then he said, 'O 'Aisha, do you know that Allah has informed me about the matter I asked Him about?' I said, 'What is it, O Messenger of Allah?' He replied, 'Two men came to me. One sat at my head, and the other sat at my feet. One of them asked the other, "What is wrong with this man?" The other replied, "He has been bewitched." The first asked, "Who bewitched him?" The other replied, "Labid ibn al-A'sam, a Jew from the tribe of Banu Zurayq." The first asked, "With what did he perform the magic?" The other replied, "With a comb, some hair from the comb, and the pollen of a male date palm." The first asked, "Where is it?" The other replied, "In the well of Dharwan."'

The Prophet (peace be upon him) went with some of his companions to the well. When he looked at it, he saw that its water was red like the infusion of henna leaves, and its palm trees were like the heads of devils. Then he returned to 'Aisha and said, 'By Allah, its water looked like red dye, and its palm trees looked like the heads of devils.'"

Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, in his commentary *Fath al-Bari*, said about this narration:
"The compiler (al-Bukhari) mentioned 27 narrations in this chapter, the first being the narration of 'Aisha: 'The Prophet (peace be upon him) was bewitched,' which will be explained further in the Book of Medicine. The reason for including it here is that magic can only occur through the assistance of devils, and this will be clarified there. Some commentators have found this problematic."

This narration raises significant concerns as it implies that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was not protected from the influence of devils, contradicting the Qur'anic assurances of his immunity. Allah states:
“[Satan] said: My Lord, grant me respite until the Day they are resurrected. [Allah] said: Indeed, you are of those reprieved, until the Day of the appointed time. [Satan] said: By Your might, I will mislead them all, except Your chosen servants among them.” (Al-Hijr: 40)

Such a claim constitutes a grave offense against the Prophet (peace be upon him), who was divinely protected from such influences. Moreover, this narration directly opposes the Qur'anic verse:
“We are most knowing of what they listen to when they listen to you and when they privately confer. When the wrongdoers say, "You follow not but a man affected by magic."“ (Al-Isra: 47)

Here, Allah denies the claim that His Prophet was bewitched, and those who assert otherwise are described as wrongdoers. Yet some have gone so far as to suggest that the Prophet (peace be upon him) imagined actions he did not perform, such as imagining intimate relations with his wives. This baseless claim amounts to hallucination, which tarnishes the dignity of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The inclusion of this narration in **Sahih al-Bukhari** makes it difficult for many to refute it. Those who adhere to the Qur'an and reject this offensive narration, denying that the Prophet was bewitched, are often labeled as disbelievers by certain Wahhabi scholars, as has been documented in this book.

6. **The Prophet prays without ablution:**

In the Book of Adhan from **Sahih al-Bukhari**, Hadith 660 states:

Ahmad narrated to us, Ibn Wahb narrated to us, Amr narrated from Abd Rabbihi ibn Sa'id, from Rukhma ibn Sulayman, from Kuraib, the freed slave of Ibn Abbas, from Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both), who said: "I spent the night at the house of Maymunah, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) was with her that night. He performed ablution and then stood to pray. I stood on his left side, but he took hold of me and placed me on his right. He prayed thirteen rak'ahs, then lay down and slept until he snored. When he slept, he would snore. Then the muezzin came to him, and he went out and prayed without performing ablution." Amr said: "I narrated this to Bukair, and he said: 'Kuraib narrated this to me as well.'"

This narration raises significant concerns, as it portrays the Prophet (peace be upon him)—known for his utmost purity and adherence to the commands of Allah—as praying without ablution after waking up from deep sleep. This claim contradicts the established Islamic ruling that sleep nullifies ablution, a principle that is widely known and unanimously agreed upon in Islamic teachings.

The suggestion that the Prophet (peace be upon him) would act contrary to the very teachings he brought is inconceivable. It undermines the respect and sanctity owed to the Prophet, presenting him in a way that contradicts his role as the model of perfect adherence to divine commands.

However, the veneration of Sahih al-Bukhari often leads to uncritical acceptance of such narrations, even when they conflict with the basic principles of Islam and the established character of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This creates a tension between the reverence for this book and the obligation to uphold the dignity and infallibility of the Prophet's actions in religious matters.

7. **The Prophet secludes himself with a married woman and sleeps at her house while she removes lice from his head:**

In the Book of Jihad and Military Expeditions from **Sahih al-Bukhari**, Hadith Number 2636 narrates:

Abdullah ibn Yusuf narrated to us from Malik, from Ishaq ibn Abdullah ibn Abi Talha, from Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to visit Umm Haram bint Milhan, who would feed him. Umm Haram was married to Ubadah ibn al-Samit. One day, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) entered her house, and she fed him and began removing lice from his head. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) then fell asleep, and when he woke up, he was laughing. She said, 'What makes you laugh, O Messenger of Allah?' He said, 'Some of my followers were presented to me in my dream as warriors in the cause of Allah, riding the sea like kings on thrones.'"

This narration presents a perplexing scenario that seems to conflict with the character and conduct of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as known in Islamic tradition. It describes him visiting a married woman, staying at her house, and even having her remove lice from his head while he falls asleep there.

Such depictions raise significant questions about their compatibility with the Quranic descriptions of the Prophet's impeccable moral conduct and the norms of propriety. These narrations have been used by critics to question the sanctity and character of the Prophet despite their apparent inconsistencies with the broader teachings of Islam.

Nevertheless, since the narration is part of **Sahih al-Bukhari**, it is often treated as beyond criticism by certain scholars and adherents, even when it seems to contradict the principles of respect and decorum established by the Prophet himself.

The narration continues:

"The Prophet (peace be upon him) placed his head down, then woke up laughing. I asked, 'What makes you laugh, O Messenger of Allah?' He said, 'Some people from my nation were presented to me in a dream as warriors in the path of Allah.' She said, 'O Messenger of Allah, pray to Allah to make me one of them.' He replied, 'You are among the first group.' She later embarked on a naval expedition during the time of Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, fell from her mount upon disembarking from the sea, and passed away."

No Muslim with a sound heart, clear mind, and respect for their faith and Prophet (peace be upon him) could accept that the noble Prophet would visit a non-mahram woman, seclude himself with her in the absence of her husband, sleep in her house, and allow her to remove lice from his head. Such a claim insinuates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was negligent in hygiene, unclean and that his head was infested with lice—a gross misrepresentation that any true believer would find appalling.

These fabricated narrations demean the character of the most honorable of creation. It is an affront to claim such actions about a Prophet sent to exemplify the highest standards of morality, purity, and nobility. The insistence of some traditionalists to accept every narration

in Sahih al-Bukhari without scrutiny, even when it contradicts reason and the Quranic description of the Prophet, reflects a blind allegiance to inherited texts at the expense of religious integrity.

We categorically reject such baseless allegations against the Prophet (peace be upon him). These claims are nothing but falsehoods and an insult to the dignity of our noble Messenger. The narrations in question serve as a test of reason and faith, and accepting them without critical evaluation diminishes the sanctity of the Prophet's character.

8. The Devil stabs the Prophet at birth:

In **Sahih al-Bukhari**, from the Book of the Beginning of Creation, under the chapter "Description of Iblis and his soldiers," Hadith number 3286 states:

Abu al-Yaman narrated to us, Shu'ayb narrated from Abu al-Zinad, from al-A'raj, from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Every child of Adam is pricked by Satan with his two fingers when born, and he cries because of that prick, except for Jesus, the son of Mary. Satan tried to prick him but pricked the veil instead."

This narration, found in **Sahih al-Bukhari**, is deeply problematic for several reasons:

1. **Insult to the Prophet (peace be upon him):** The claim that Satan was able to prick the Prophet (peace be upon him) at birth is an affront to his infallibility and the protection granted to him by Allah. It implies a vulnerability that is incongruent with the Prophet's elevated status and divine safeguarding.
2. **Contradiction of Prophetic Purity:** The narration elevates the protection of Jesus (peace be upon him) over that of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), despite the Quran affirming the equal and special status of all prophets.
3. **Implications about Human Nature:** The idea that every child is subjected to Satan's influence at birth, with the exception of Jesus, contradicts the broader Islamic teachings that emphasize the innate purity and innocence of newborns.

This narration is one of the contentious reports that raise significant theological and intellectual concerns. It undermines the sanctity and divine protection of the Prophet (peace be upon him), presenting a narrative that is inconsistent with the Quranic depiction of his status and character.

Such reports, even when found in revered collections like Sahih al-Bukhari, necessitate critical examination. Blind acceptance of every narration without reconciling it with the Quran and sound reasoning risks perpetuating misconceptions that tarnish the reputation of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the integrity of Islamic teachings.

The devil stabs the Prophet at birth:

This narration, as cited from **Sahih al-Bukhari**, implies that all humans, including the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), were touched by Satan at birth, with the exception of Mary and her son, Jesus (peace be upon them both). The Hadith, attributed to Abu Hurayrah, states:

"Every child of Adam, when born, is touched by Satan, and thus cries out except for Mary and her son. Abu Hurayrah would then recite: "And I seek refuge for her and her offspring from the accursed devil" (Al-Imran: 36)."

Concerns with the Narration

1. **Contradiction to the Prophet's Status:**
   The claim that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was touched by Satan at birth, while Jesus (peace be upon him) was protected, undermines the divine protection (عصمة) bestowed upon the Prophet. This assertion elevates Jesus and Mary above the Prophet Muhammad in terms of spiritual immunity, which is contrary to Islamic teachings that affirm the unique and highest status of the Prophet Muhammad among all creation.
2. **Tarnishing the Prophet's Image:**
   This narration diminishes the dignity and honor of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) by implying that he was not spared from Satan's influence. It portrays him as similar to ordinary humans in this regard, which directly conflicts with the Quranic assertion of his exemplary character and divine safeguarding.
3. **Double Standards in Defense of the Prophet:**
   While many religious scholars and followers have vehemently opposed contemporary offenses against the Prophet, such as cartoons or derogatory depictions, they remain silent about problematic narrations in **Sahih al-Bukhari**. These narrations arguably present a more severe affront to the Prophet's status by perpetuating misconceptions within the Muslim community itself.

A Call for Reassessment

This narration is an example of how uncritical adherence to secondary texts, even revered ones like Sahih al-Bukhari, can lead to theological and intellectual inconsistencies. The apparent sanctification of such texts sometimes surpasses the respect due to the Quran and the Prophet himself. Muslims must critically evaluate these narrations in light of the Quran and the established principles of Islam to ensure that the Prophet's dignity and status remain uncompromised.

To defend the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is not only to counter external offenses but also to reject internal misrepresentations that diminish his unparalleled honor and virtue.

The devil teaches religion, and the Prophet approves of learning from him:

In the **Book of Agency** in **Sahih al-Bukhari**, under the chapter "If one deputizes a man who leaves something and the principal approves it," the following narration is found:

'Uthman ibn al-Haytham narrated to us from Abu Amr, who narrated from 'Awf, from Muhammad ibn Sirin, from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), who said:

"The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) entrusted me to guard the zakat of Ramadan. A man came and started taking handfuls of food. I caught him and said, 'By Allah, I will take you to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).' He said, 'I am in need, and I have dependents and am in severe hardship.' So I let him go.

The next morning, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'O Abu Hurayrah, what happened with your prisoner last night?' I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, he complained of dire need and dependents, so I had compassion for him and let him go.'

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'He lied to you, and he will return.'

The next night, the man returned and started taking handfuls of food. I caught him and said, 'By Allah, I will take you to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him).' He said, 'Leave me, for I am in need and have dependents. I will not come again.' So I let him go.

The next morning, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'O Abu Hurayrah, what happened with your prisoner last night?' I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, he complained of dire need and dependents, so I had compassion for him and let him go.'

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'He lied to you, and he will return.'

On the third night, the man came again and started taking handfuls of food. I caught him and said, 'By Allah, I will take you to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). This is the last of three times. You claimed you would not return, yet you did.'

He said, 'Let me go, and I will teach you something beneficial.' I said, 'What is it?' He replied, 'When you go to bed, recite Ayat al-Kursi: “Allah! There is no deity but Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence…” [Al-Baqarah: 255] until the end of the verse. It will protect you, and no devil will come near you until morning.'

So I let him go.

The next morning, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'What happened with your prisoner last night?' I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, he claimed he would teach me something beneficial, so I let him go.'

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'What did he teach you?' I said, 'He told me to recite Ayat al-Kursi before going to bed, saying it would protect me until morning and no devil would approach me.'

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'He told you the truth, though he is a liar. Do you know who you were speaking to for the past three nights, O Abu Hurayrah?' I said, 'No.' The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'That was Satan.'"

Concerns Raised by the Narration:

1. **Satan Teaching Religion:**
   This narration presents Satan, the arch-enemy of humanity, as a source of religious knowledge. This is highly contradictory to the Quranic portrayal of Satan as a deceiver and misguider, whose sole aim is to lead humanity astray.
2. **Approval from the Prophet (peace be upon him):**
   The Prophet (peace be upon him) seemingly acknowledges Satan's advice as truthful and beneficial, which raises questions about the credibility of taking religious guidance from a being explicitly condemned as a liar and deceiver in Islamic teachings.
3. **Inconsistency with Islamic Principles:**
   Islam emphasizes the Quran and Sunnah as the sole sources of guidance. Accepting advice from Satan, even if truthful, appears to conflict with the principle of rejecting any association with him in matters of faith.

This narration is problematic and opens the door for theological confusion. While Ayat al-Kursi is undoubtedly a verse of immense protection and benefit, attributing its teaching to Satan, with the Prophet's approval, undermines the Quranic message of Satan being an enemy to humanity. Such narrations require critical examination, as they pose risks of distorting foundational beliefs about the nature of divine guidance and the character of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

This narration from **Sahih al-Bukhari** regarding Abu Hurayrah's encounter with a thief highlights several significant concerns and theological contradictions. The story implies that:

1. **Abu Hurayrah's Actions:**
   Abu Hurayrah caught a thief who was stealing from the public zakat funds—funds that belonged to the Muslim community and not to Abu Hurayrah personally. Despite this, he repeatedly released the thief without proper justification. The expectation,

especially given his role as a guardian of public funds, would have been to report the thief to the Prophet (peace be upon him) for appropriate action. Instead, he acted contrary to this duty.

2. **The Prophet's Reaction:**
   The narration suggests that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not reprimand Abu Hurayrah for his actions despite knowing beforehand (through revelation) that the thief would return. This raises questions about the Prophet's (peace be upon him) response to the repeated mishandling of communal wealth, which is inconsistent with the Prophet's known sense of justice and responsibility.

3. **Learning from Satan:**
   The thief, later revealed to be Satan, teaches Abu Hurayrah the virtue of reciting Ayat al-Kursi for protection from harm. The Prophet (peace be upon him) acknowledges the truth of this advice, saying, *"He told you the truth, though he is a liar."*
   This presents a theological issue: Satan, the sworn enemy of mankind, is portrayed as a teacher of religious benefit, with the Prophet (peace be upon him) confirming his guidance. This appears inconsistent with the Quranic portrayal of Satan as a deceiver and misguider.

4. **Implications for Public Funds:**
   Allowing the theft of communal resources without accountability sets a problematic precedent. It undermines the sanctity of public wealth and the responsibilities entrusted to those guarding it.

Broader Concerns:

This narration, while included in **Sahih al-Bukhari**, presents several challenges to Islamic principles, including:

- **Accountability and Justice:** The mishandling of communal funds and the lack of consequences contradict Islamic teachings on safeguarding public wealth.
- **Reliance on Satan's Advice:** The story inadvertently legitimizes learning from Satan, which conflicts with the Quran's warnings about Satan's deceptive nature.
- **Unquestioned Acceptance:** The absence of critical engagement with such narrations in traditional discourse has led to their continued propagation despite their theological and rational inconsistencies.

Conclusion:

This narration raises significant concerns about its compatibility with the Quranic principles of justice, accountability, and the Prophet's exemplary character. While the recitation of Ayat al-Kursi is undoubtedly beneficial, attributing its teaching to Satan and presenting the Prophet's implicit approval of this interaction undermines core Islamic teachings. Such narrations require careful reevaluation to preserve the integrity of Islamic theology and the noble character of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

This narration presents several theological and logical contradictions that challenge the coherence of Islamic teachings and the integrity of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) mission. Here are the main issues raised:

1. The Credibility of the Thief and Abu Hurayrah's Actions

The narration describes Abu Hurayrah trusting the thief, despite the Prophet (peace be upon him) forewarning him that the thief would return. This repeated release of the thief, who was ultimately revealed to be Satan, reflects a lack of prudence, especially when safeguarding communal wealth like zakat.

Problem:

- Abu Hurayrah ignored the Prophet's explicit warning that the thief was lying and would return, which raises questions about his judgment and responsibility as a guardian of public funds.
- The thief's supposed plea for compassion contradicts his ultimate identity as Satan, who is characterized in the Quran as deceitful and manipulative.

2. Satan Teaching Religious Knowledge

The thief, revealed as Satan, teaches Abu Hurayrah to recite Ayat al-Kursi for protection. The Prophet (peace be upon him) later acknowledges this advice as truthful, saying, *"He told you the truth, though he is a liar."*

Problem:

- The idea that Satan, the arch-enemy of humanity, could be a source of religious guidance is contradictory to the Quran, which consistently warns against Satan as a deceiver:

"Indeed, Satan is an enemy to you, so take him as an enemy." [Surah Fatir: 6]

- The Prophet's approval of this teaching implies that Satan can contribute positively to Islamic knowledge, which undermines the Quranic portrayal of Satan as a being whose sole purpose is to misguide humanity.

3. Satan's Mastery of the Quran

The narration suggests that Satan knows the Quran well, including the precise benefits of Ayat al-Kursi. This portrayal creates theological tension regarding the nature of divine revelation and the exclusivity of prophetic knowledge.

Problem:

- If Satan is shown to possess deep knowledge of the Quran and its virtues, it raises questions about the exclusivity of divine guidance and the role of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as the sole teacher of the Quran.
- Accepting religious teachings from Satan contradicts the fundamental principle that guidance comes from Allah through His messengers.

4. The Prophet's (peace be upon him) Acknowledgment of Satan's Truthfulness

The Prophet's statement, *"He told you the truth, though he is a liar,"* validates Satan's teaching and gives it legitimacy.

Problem:

- This acknowledgment could be misconstrued as an endorsement of learning from Satan, which is incompatible with Islamic teachings.
- It raises a troubling precedent: if Satan can be truthful in religious matters, how can Muslims discern divine guidance from deception?

5. Implications for Islamic Principles

This narration leads to broader issues:

- **Justice and Accountability:** The repeated release of the thief undermines the principles of justice and communal responsibility.
- **Religious Integrity:** The idea that Satan could teach beneficial religious knowledge diminishes the sanctity and exclusivity of Islamic teachings.
- **Contradictions with the Quran:** The Quran categorically condemns Satan as a deceiver, making it illogical to attribute truthfulness or beneficial teachings to him.

Conclusion

This narration, despite its inclusion in **Sahih al-Bukhari**, contains elements that are inconsistent with Quranic principles, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) role, and Islamic theology. Accepting it without critical examination risks distorting foundational beliefs and misrepresenting the Prophet's mission. Such narrations demand a thorough and principled reassessment to ensure they align with the Quran and established Islamic teachings.

While the recitation of Ayat al-Kursi is undoubtedly beneficial, attributing its teaching to Satan and portraying the Prophet's (peace be upon him) approval of this interaction undermines the integrity of Islamic guidance and the sanctity of divine revelation.

This text provides a sharp critique of certain narrations found in Sahih al-Bukhari, particularly those involving interactions with devils and their purported teaching of religious matters to humans. The key points highlighted in this critique include:

1. **Questioning the Credibility of the Narration:**
    - The text describes the narration as a myth and dismisses the claim that devils can take human form and interact with humans as a significant contradiction to Quranic principles and the foundations of Islam.
    - It argues that the narration suffers from evident flaws, including inconsistency and interpolation by narrators, which undermines its credibility.
2. **The Status of Ayat al-Kursi:**
    - The text points out that Ayat al-Kursi has a well-established and revered status in Islam, having been taught to Muslims by the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself since the early days of its revelation during the Prophet's migration to Medina.
    - It challenges the suggestion that Satan could have been the one to introduce the virtues of this verse, given its prominence and divine significance.
3. **Criticism of Blind Defense of the Narration:**
    - Despite its apparent weaknesses and inconsistencies, the text critiques scholars who have gone to great lengths to defend this narration.
    - It highlights that Ibn Hajar, in *Fath al-Bari*, reluctantly acknowledged issues with the narration but failed to decisively challenge its authenticity, reflecting an overzealous effort to protect Sahih al-Bukhari's reputation.
4. **Call for Critical Reassessment:**
    - The critique invites readers to reflect critically on these narrations and their implications, urging those who seek the truth to consider the evident flaws in the text.

- It argues for a re-evaluation of Sahih al-Bukhari's authenticity and connection to Imam al-Bukhari, suggesting that a deeper investigation could expose significant issues with its content.

The text concludes by suggesting that these critiques should be enough for anyone with a sincere heart and open mind to question the sanctity of these narrations before moving on to the final chapter of the book, which examines the authenticity of Sahih al-Bukhari and its attribution to Imam al-Bukhari, aiming to "nail the final nail in its coffin."

Chapter 5: Who is the author of Sahih al-Bukhari?

1. The Original Manuscript of *Sahih al-Bukhari*
2. The Mingana Manuscript
3. *Sahih al-Bukhari* and his Students
4. *Sahih al-Bukhari* and Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani
5. Variations in the Manuscripts of *Sahih al-Bukhari*
6. Who Authored It?

The Original Manuscript of Sahih al-Bukhari

After we have clarified in the previous two chapters the reality of the myth surrounding Al-Bukhari, primarily tied to the book *Al-Jami' al-Sahih*, and presented evidence to debunk it after outlining its broad aspects and delving into its contents, we have seen how this myth cannot withstand the overwhelming facts that refute and dismantle it. It is weaker than a spider's web and too frail to stand against even the first piece of opposing evidence or argument.

Given all this, we have the right to question and challenge those who glorify the original manuscript of *Sahih al-Bukhari*, as authored by Sheikh Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari. If we now have this book called *Al-Jami' al-Sahih of Al-Bukhari*—originally titled *Al-Jami' al-Musnad al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar min Umur Rasul Allah (S) wa-Sunanihi wa-Ayyamihi*—and it is, as we have demonstrated, riddled with major errors, grand myths, and grave insults to religion, the Prophet, the Lord of Glory, and even humanity and animals, then it is our right to examine the authenticity of this book.

We must ask: What is the connection between Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari and this book that bears his name? It is also our right to question those who lavish *Sahih al-Bukhari* with excessive praise, raising it to the highest heavens and elevating Sheikh Al-Bukhari even further.

For this reason, we demand the presentation of the original manuscript of *Sahih al-Bukhari* as penned by Sheikh Al-Bukhari himself. This is a challenge we have raised multiple times over the past five years, and we continue to raise it to this day. We challenge these praisers to provide us with the original manuscript written by Sheikh Al-Bukhari during the authorship of his *Al-Jami' al-Sahih*.

All the reports from prominent figures of Hadith scholarship and historians who narrated the biography of Muhammad ibn Ismail Al-Bukhari confirm that he authored his book in his own handwriting and left a copy of it with his student Al-Firabri.

So, we ask them: Where is this manuscript now? Where is it located? In which library or museum is it resting, embalmed, or stored? But believe me, none of these scholars know. The truth they want to hide, which we aim to reveal in this book, is that there is not a single manuscript in the entire world written in the handwriting of Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, for *Sahih al-Bukhari*!

We pose the question and insist on pressing it further, especially since we know that Sheikh Al-Bukhari was of Persian origin, and Arabic was not his native language. None of the historians, scholars, Hadith compilers, biographers, or narrators who recounted the legend of Al-Bukhari mentioned when or how he learned the Arabic language. All they spoke of was his beginning to memorize Hadith as a young boy, not older than ten years.

To spare these scholars the effort, as we know in advance their inability to answer, we took it upon ourselves to search for the original manuscript of *Sahih al-Bukhari* on their behalf. What we found was a detailed catalog by Ibrahim Al-Yahya, listing manuscripts in the King Abdulaziz Public Library in Riyadh. He presents what he calls the "original" manuscripts of *Al-Jami' al-Sahih*. This presentation was published on the website "Ahl al-Hadith," a Salafi site defending Hadith sciences and fervently supporting *Al-Jami' al-Sahih* of Al-Bukhari.

We will cite the detailed listing of the "original" manuscripts of *Sahih al-Bukhari* housed in the King Abdulaziz Public Library. After presenting this list, we will provide commentary. The archivist under the heading:

"Statement of the Original Copies of Al-Jami' al-Sahih by Al-Bukhari Preserved in the King Abdulaziz Public Library in Riyadh"

The arrangement of copies is based on sequential preservation numbers. A table was created with columns, including:

1. **Serial Number:** The manuscript's sequential number.
2. **Preservation Number:** The archive number in their records.
3. **Date of Copying:** Either explicitly stated or estimated.
4. **Volume Status:** A description of whether the manuscript is complete or missing parts.
5. **Remarks:** Notes about the manuscript.

This framework was established to catalog and provide an overview of what is claimed to be "original" copies of *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

The following are a few examples of the source materials in our possesion.

م	الحفظ	تاريخ النسخ	الجزء	ملاحظات
1	13	ق10	-	قطعة منه مغربي
2	10	ق11	-	قطعة منه مغربي
3	20	ق 12	ج10/ج9	مغربي
4	114	ق 11	ج16	مغربي
5	119	ق 12	ج 23	مغربي
6	148	ق13	ج 5	مغربي
7	168	ق 12	-	قطعة منه مغربي
8	169	ق 12	-	قطعة منه مغربي
9	182	ق 12	ج 3	مغربي
10	290	ق12 هـ	-	الربع الثاني
11	1217	ق12 هـ	ج 1	-
12	1279	ق12	ج 1	-
13	1473	ق 11	ج 1	-
14	1520	ق11	ج7	-
15	1698	ق 12هـ	-	من المغازي إلى الأخير
16	1696	ق12	-	قطعه منه
17	-	ق11	-	من المغازي إلى الأخير
18	1940	ق12هـ	ج1	أحمد رزق
19	1941	1280هـ	ج2	أحمد رزق
20	1942	1280هـ	ج3	أحمد رزق
21	1943	1280هـ	ج4	أحمد رزق
22	1952	1124هـ	ج17	محمد شريف

"أرقام الحفظ" = "Preservation Numbers"
"بيانات الفهرسة" = "Indexing Data"
"صور أول وآخر النسخة" = "First and Last Pages of the Copy"
"رقم الحفظ: 1" = "Preservation Number: 1"

Art: The Noble Hadith and its Sciences
Title: Al-Jami' Al-Sahih
Other Title: Sahih al-Bukhari
Author: Muhammad ibn Ismail ibn Ibrahim ibn al-Mughira al-Ju'fi, known as Abu Abdullah al-Bukhari
Date of Death: 256 AH / 870 CE
Famous Name: Imam Bukhari
Language of Manuscript: Arabic
Date of the Copy: 10th century AH / 16th century CE (estimated)
Type of Script: Maghribi
Number of Pages: 112 pages
Number of Lines: 27 lines
Beginning of the Manuscript:

"...If the she-camel reaches six to thirty, it should be considered a young female camel; if it reaches thirty to forty, it should be considered a full-grown one. When it reaches forty to sixty, it should be counted as a mature one, and when it reaches sixty to seventy, it should be counted as an even older one... This chapter does not accept as charity any camels that are too old or have defects, except for what the charity giver chooses."

End of the Manuscript:

"...This chapter is about the child of a woman who has been freed. Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Among the signs of the Hour is that the slave woman will give birth to her master.' Abu al-Yaman narrated to us."

References:
Al-I'lam, 6/34
Mu'jam al-Mu'allifin, 9/52

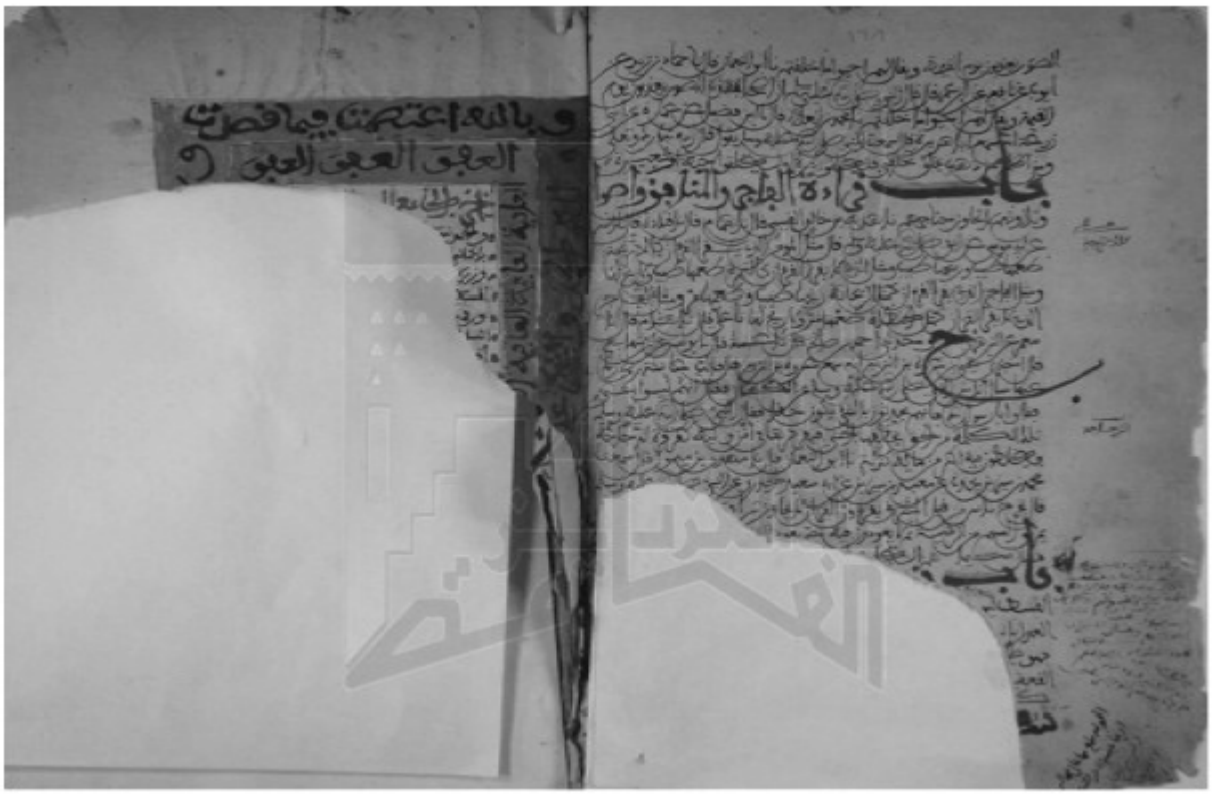
Printing and Publishing Information:
Printed

Other Information:

The manuscript is a fragment of the book, with the beginning and end missing. It starts during the Book of Zakat (charity) and ends during the Book of Partnership (Al-Sharika). The majority of the text is written in black ink, while the headings of the books and chapters, along with their titles, are written in red ink.

Preservation Number: 16

Art: Hadith
Title: Al-Jami' Al-Sahih (a part of it)
Other Title: Sahih al-Bukhari
Author: Muhammad ibn Ismail ibn Ibrahim ibn al-Mughira al-Ju'fi, known as Abu Abdullah al-Bukhari
Date of Death: 256 AH / 867 CE
Famous Name: Imam Bukhari
Language of Manuscript: Arabic
Date of the Copy: 11th century AH / 17th century CE (estimated)
Type of Script: Maghribi



Here is the translation of the provided text:

Number of Pages: 198 pages
Dimensions: 18½ × 29½ cm
Number of Lines: 29 lines

Beginning of the Manuscript:
The Book of Expenditures, concerning the virtue of spending on... and the saying of Allah, the Almighty: "They ask you what they should spend. Say, 'The excess...'" (The manuscript is missing the first part, and this beginning does not appear in it. It is likely that the correct title should be: "The Chapter of Spending on One's Family.")

End of the Manuscript:
"...The Chapter on the Saying of Allah, the Almighty: 'And Allah created you and whatever you do. Indeed, everything We created with predestination...'"
"...The Chapter on the Reading of the Corrupt and Hypocrites and their Conditions..."

References:
Al-I'lam, 6/34
King Faisal Center for Islamic Heritage (Heritage Library)
Kashf al-Zunoon, 1/541
Al-Ward, 1146
Al-Azhariyyah, 1/439

Printing and Publishing Information:
Printed: See the *Dictionary of Printed Books*, 1/535

Other Information:
This manuscript is incomplete at the beginning and end. It is written in black ink, with chapter headings in red. It contains annotations, corrections, and remarks. It was copied in the year 1009 AH, and it is a part of the narration of Abu Dharr al-Harawi from his three teachers.

Therefore, after presenting this detailed report on the holdings of the King Abdulaziz Public Library, it becomes clear beyond any doubt that there is a misrepresentation when the library claims that these are the original manuscripts of Sahih al-Bukhari, as they are centuries removed from the known historical date of the book, spanning hundreds of years. How, then, can the library describe them as original copies of Sahih al-Bukhari?

The original manuscript of the book is the one handwritten by the author himself, considering that during the era when Sahih al-Bukhari was written, the only method of writing was by hand on some form of material. However, the library is describing these manuscripts, which are hundreds of years removed from the death of Sheikh Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, as "original copies," even though many of these manuscripts have unknown copyists, and some of them have estimated dates of writing or attribution to the scribe. Most of them are fragmented parts of the book and not complete manuscripts of the entire Sahih al-Bukhari, as you will notice.

Therefore, there is no original manuscript of Sahih al-Bukhari in the handwriting of its author. There is no manuscript in any library in the world written by the author himself. This is the truth that some libraries try to conceal and deceive the public into thinking that these are the original manuscripts of Sahih al-Bukhari, while these are simply manuscripts copied by unknown scribes, and we do not truly know from which exact original they were copied. We will clarify this matter further in the rest of this book.

There may be some readers or critics who may argue that what I have attempted to convey to you regarding these manuscripts is only available in one library in the Islamic world. Perhaps there is a manuscript in the handwriting of Sheikh Bukhari for Sahih al-Bukhari in one of these libraries, and the response to this will be taken from the archivist Ibrahim al-Yahya, who presented these manuscripts and confirmed that the King Abdulaziz Library has contact...

And the library deals with all libraries in the world, including Al-Azhar Library in Egypt, Al-Qarawiyyin in Fez, and all Islamic world libraries. You will notice that the presented manuscripts through the presentation of the Riyadh library's manuscript of Sahih al-Bukhari are preceded by copies brought from Morocco with the original Moroccan script.

Thus, it is clear that if there was a manuscript of Sahih al-Bukhari in the handwriting of Sheikh al-Bukhari, we would find a copy of it in this library. This is what we find supported by the valuable research conducted by the Iraqi researcher Dr. Korkis Saad, entitled: "The Oldest Arabic Manuscripts in World Libraries, Written from the Beginning of Islam until the Year 500 AH (1106 AD)" published by the Ministry of Culture and Information in Iraq in 1982.

Dr. Korkis Saad conducted a general survey of the Arabic manuscripts in all world libraries. Strangely, through this valuable research, we find that there is no manuscript of any Arabic book from the first three centuries of the Hijri era, except for the Qur'an and the book of Sibawayh. On page 112 of this book, under catalog number [303], there is information about a manuscript of Sahih al-Bukhari (known as "Sahih al-Bukhari"): Author: Imam Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, born in 194 AH, and passed away in 256 AH (870 AD).

This is the third part of a four-part edition of the book, dated 407 AH (1016 AD), in 109 pages with catalog number [op.801]. It is located in the Eastern section of the National Library of the People's Library in Sofia, Bulgaria, and is written in the Bulgarian Cyrillic script, with a Latin transliteration.

Thus, from this transmission, the first historically dated manuscript of Sahih al-Bukhari dates back to 407 AH, i.e., 151 years after the death of Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, and it does not represent the entire book of Sahih al-Bukhari but rather a part of it. This is a significant time gap.

This manuscript dates back to the death of Al-Bukhari, i.e., more than three generations, and no one from the era of Al-Bukhari or even his contemporaries remains alive, which raises a critical question: what proves the relationship between Al-Bukhari and this book? How can a manuscript of a small part of Sahih al-Bukhari be dated a century and a half after Al-Bukhari's death?

This valuable research by Korkis Saad does not stop here. On page 113 of the same book, under catalog number [304], it contains information about a manuscript of Sahih al-Bukhari**:** Part Two from a manuscript in the Berlin Library cataloged as number 1156, dated 424 AH = 1033 AD.

Thus, from this manuscript, we learn that its date of copying is 424 AH, i.e., 168 years after the death of Sheikh Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari. This manuscript does not represent the entire Sahih al-Bukhari but rather a small part of it.

Therefore, it is significantly removed from the historical date of Al-Bukhari's death and also from the death of all his students, which makes us truly wonder, especially since scholars and jurists confidently claim that the Sahih al-Bukhari we have in our hands is from Sheikh Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, while they have no strong proof of this. In fact, the evidence we now have, which we present to you in this book, contradicts what these scholars boast about, and they are unaware of these manuscripts.

In page 113 of Dr. Korkis Saad's book, under catalog number [305], there is information about a manuscript of Sahih al-Bukhari in the Dar al-Kutub Library, dated 495 AH = 1102 AD. It was copied by the scribe Moritz, model number MORITZ.PL.128.

This manuscript represents a complete copy of Sahih al-Bukhari, but it was written in the latter half of the fifth century of the Hijri calendar, i.e., after the death of Sheikh al-Bukhari by about...

This is a significant time gap, extending over six generations. Despite this, we still have people who confidently claim that Sahih al-Bukhari was compiled, written, and classified by Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari. This has become one of those certainties that are not open to debate. Meanwhile, there is no single copy of Sahih al-Bukhari in the world in the handwriting of Imam Bukhari, or even in the handwriting of any of his students. Even if we were to relax this point and suggest that the original copy authored by Sheikh Bukhari was lost, as mentioned in the introduction to the book "Al-Fath" by Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, which states that more than seventy thousand students learned Sahih al-Bukhari from the Sheikh, implying that seventy thousand copies of Sahih al-Bukhari should have been left behind. However, the bitter truth that those who introduce this book are unaware of is that there is not a single copy of the book written by these seventy thousand students.

This makes us question with great sincerity and with growing doubt: Who really authored Sahih al-Bukhari? And is it possible to attribute this book to a person when there is no evidence of any connection, either close or distant, between the person and this book?

For clarification, everything we have said about the manuscripts of Sahih al-Bukhari applies to all the books of Hadith without exception. We have chosen Sahih al-Bukhari only as a model for the other books of Hadith.

The Mingana Manuscript

I had written an article five years ago titled "Did Imam Bukhari author Sahih al-Bukhari?" In it, I discussed the absence of any manuscript of Sahih al-Bukhari written by Imam Bukhari or any of his students or even the students of his students. Many people, stirred by zeal, jumped to respond to me. After insulting and cursing me and accusing me of heresy in my faith and beliefs, they finally admitted that I was truthful in saying there is no manuscript of Sahih al-Bukhari written by Imam Bukhari or by his students. However, they insisted that this does not prevent Sahih al-Bukhari from being authored by Imam Bukhari!

I was truly astonished by their rigidity and stubbornness. I tried to discuss their points but faced repeated resistance, hoping to find a connection between us. However, many of these scholars began to boast about a miraculous manuscript of Sahih al-Bukhari discovered by the English Orientalist "Manjana," claiming that it is narrated by al-Murrozi, as stated by its supporters. They assert that it is the oldest surviving manuscript of Sahih al-Bukhari, written in the year 370 AH, a year before the death of al-Murrozi in 371 AH, meaning it was written 114 years after the death of Imam Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari.

I am almost certain that these individuals know nothing about the "Manjana" manuscript, as had they truly researched this manuscript, they would have found elements that do not support their claims but rather contradict them. Through this section, we aim to help them uncover the truth about the "Manjana" manuscript.

When the English Orientalist Manjana presented this manuscript, his main aim was to cast doubt on Sahih al-Bukhari. Anyone who wishes to verify this can refer to the research presented by Dr. Ahmed bin Faris al-Saloum.

A Wahhabi Salafi Sheikh, in response to the criticisms made by Manjana based on his famous manuscript, which he considers to be the oldest manuscript of Sahih al-Bukhari, takes pride in it. Dr. Ahmed bin Faris al-Saloum titled his research: "A Letter in Response to Manjana's Objections Regarding Sahih al-Bukhari." His research was published on his personal blog with this paragraph:

"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Praise be to Allah alone, and peace and blessings upon the one after whom there is no prophet.

Dear Brother Ahmed Nafe', may Allah benefit him, peace be upon you, and Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you.

As for what follows: I have received your letter containing the objections of the Eastern scholar Manjana, which cast doubt on Sahih al-Bukhari, and you requested a response. I apologize for the delay in replying due to my involvement in numerous duties, but I found no alternative but to respond to your request, sincerely for the sake of Allah, His Messenger, and for the Muslims in general, and specifically in defense of the Sahih al-Bukhari of Imam al-Bukhari.

And as you mentioned, you wished for a translation of what I write into English, so perhaps a seeker of truth will benefit from it, or a seeker of knowledge will find guidance."

Thus, this Wahhabi Sheikh strongly confirms that the oldest manuscript of Sahih al-Bukhari in the world was discovered by "Manjana," who sought to criticize the Sahih al-Bukhari we have today. The study accompanying this manuscript aimed to cast doubt on the Sahih al-Bukhari, but those who readily accept any evidence to support their claims about the authenticity of the book must verify whether the evidence actually serves their argument or works against it.

Dr. Ahmed bin Faris al-Saloum begins his letter in response to Manjana's objections by stating: "I have studied Manjana's research and his manuscript long ago, with the help of my brother, the esteemed Sheikh Abu Ahmad Nizam Ya'qub al-Bahraini, may Allah bless him, who provided me with it."

With a copy of the Manjana manuscript of Sahih, and studying it, I sought to benefit from it in my own research on Sahih, as I was working on a summarized version of the Sahih at that time.

Before I present what Manjana has written, I must point out something that some researchers have overlooked, especially those who have attempted to respond to the critiques of the Eastern scholars and refute their objections. It is this:

While many who have written or researched the objections of the Eastern scholars generally deal with their criticisms one by one, refuting and invalidating them, this is good. However, a better approach is to first explain the methodology of these Eastern scholars, which is the foundation of their objections and the source of their false claims. If we can dismantle this methodology and expose its flaws, we will have refuted the weak arguments that were built upon it, arguments based on a misleading and faulty scientific approach. We would also reveal their hatred and envy, which Allah (glorified and exalted) informed us about in various verses, such as His saying, "Out of envy from themselves" (Qur'an). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also confirmed this in numerous hadiths.

I will therefore point you, my dear brother, to this methodology they adopted, and the mirage they pursued in spreading their falsehoods and promoting their doubts. I will then present the truth in response to Manjana's objections, addressing each of his doubts in detail to refute them, and exposing their falsehood, for "falsehood is bound to perish" (Qur'an).

The point here is that Ahmed bin Faris al-Saloum is very angry with Manjana and the manuscript of Bukhari. He has linked the manuscript to Manjana in a way that makes it clear that he completely rejects this manuscript and the study associated with it. He believes that what Manjana has introduced is mere falsehoods, hatred, and envy, which are part of the Eastern scholars' deceptive approach.

At a time when some are trying to argue that there is no evidence to show that Imam al-Bukhari had any connection to the book of Sahih Bukhari as we have it today, we find a researcher who is well-versed in the realities of this matter, confronting this manuscript and the criticisms put forth by its author. This definitively shows that those who claim knowledge of this manuscript are entirely unaware of its content, yet they boast and use it as evidence.

Dr. Ahmed bin Faris al-Saloum quoted excerpts from Manjana's words in his preliminary study of his famous manuscript, which Dr. al-Saloum introduced with the first objection he mentioned: "The text of Manjana." Each hadith, whether long or short, begins with the phrase: "Bukhari informed us," followed by "So-and-so said," and in any other book, the reader can easily infer from these introductory words that the author himself did not write the book, but rather one of his students did. This assumption is confirmed by the statement at the beginning of the book, on page 26, where the names of the narrators or hadith scholars who informed the writer of this

manuscript are mentioned, such as Abu Zayd Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Mawzi and Muhammad bin Yusuf al-Farabari. This assumption is difficult to defend for anyone studying this manuscript carefully. In fact, the author of this manuscript does not say, "My teacher al-Mawzi, who was authorized by al-Farabari, permitted me to write the text of Bukhari in this way and that way." Instead, he simply presents the full text, starting with the phrase: "Al-Mawzi narrated to us, who narrated from al-Farabari, who narrated from Bukhari, who said such-and-such." And the transmitted information is not exclusively presented as such unless it is a historical fact that Bukhari used these words as they appear in the manuscript.

Here, Manjana attempts to build his argument using the chains of transmission found in the manuscript, suggesting that this proves that Sahih al-Bukhari does not exist in an original version written by the hand of Imam al-Bukhari himself. This is the conclusion Manjana also reaches through his manuscript, which is praised by those defending the idea that the Sahih Bukhari we have today is the same one written by Bukhari, as they try to discuss the chain of transmission in his manuscript. The claim "So-and-so narrated to us that so-and-so said" does not mean, in any case, that there was authorization from the narrator to recite the text or the book; rather, these are historical narrations that "may be correct or may be incorrect," according to Bukhari's words.

Then Manjana also addresses the beginning of each chain of narration of a hadith with the phrase, "Bukhari narrated from others." Is it conceivable that Bukhari is the author of these words? Common sense dictates that it must be...

The author of the manuscript is one of Bukhari's students; otherwise, the phrase would begin with "So-and-so narrated to us." You will not find Bukhari's name mentioned in the chain of transmission of every hadith.

Manjana further clarifies, through his study of his famous manuscript, that his manuscript differs from other manuscripts of *Sahih Bukhari* that are available to us. He says:

"The features that distinguish this manuscript from others reflect the differences in the text compared to other manuscripts and the printed versions of Sahih Bukhari*. These differences include a large number of variations in vocabulary. I will provide an example from the Book of Hajj in* Sahih Bukhari *to show a comparison between the printed version published in Cairo in 1345 AH and the text as it appears in our manuscript. Another distinctive feature of this manuscript is the different arrangement of the books compared to the arrangement found in other manuscripts and printed versions."*

Thus, for those who praise Manjana's manuscript of *Sahih Bukhari*, here is Manjana himself presenting the hard truth: the manuscript he possesses of *Sahih Bukhari* differs from all other manuscripts of the *Sahih*. Which of the manuscripts can we authentically confirm as the original authored by Imam Muhammad bin Ismail al-Bukhari? Here, scholars find themselves in a dilemma as they attempt to use a manuscript that contradicts their goals and purposes.

Even Dr. Ahmed bin Faris al-Saloum, who responded to Manjana's objections, could not deny this fact but tried to justify it with strange and weak reasoning. He said:

"I say: yes, there are differences between the versions of Sahih Bukhari *because, as I mentioned, Bukhari narrated in many places, and not all the narrators heard it in one session. The history, location, and circumstances in which the narrators heard from Bukhari vary..."*

It is said about their narrators, and he (Dr. Ahmed) seems to imply that Bukhari, in every session, would narrate his *Sahih* in a manner that was different from other sessions. This variation in narration is inherent, meaning that Bukhari did not necessarily endorse a written book but rather orally narrated his *Sahih*, sometimes altering the order of narration in different sessions. This argument suggests that we are expected to overlook logic, as everyone knows—according to the transmitted narrations—that Bukhari authored and wrote a manuscript, which he named "Al-Jami' al-Musnad al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar min Umuri Rasul Allah wa Sunnahihi wa Ayamihi," widely known as *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Therefore, there is no sense in discussing differences in narration due to changes in the place of narration.

Manjana emphasizes that the scholars of *Sahih Bukhari* have never had access to an original manuscript of *Sahih Bukhari*, not even a copy from his students. He writes:

"I have reviewed the printed texts of these commentaries and was surprised to find that they did not have the old version of Sahih Bukhari*, except for what was prepared by al-Samm'ani, Ibn Asakir, al-Sughani, al-Yunini, and others. It is well-known that they often refer to al-Farbari, al-Kushaymi, and other earlier narrators. However, they did not have a manuscript written by their hands, and it seems that they only learned these texts in the traditional way, from the works of later hadith scholars such as Abu Dharr, Abu al-Waqt, and others."*

Of the 27 commentators mentioned by Brockelmann, all of whom died after the year 559 AH—except for one—the period during which the *Sahih Bukhari* manuscript stabilized in its final form was during the time of the best early scholars and narrators of the text: Abu Dharr, Abu al-Waqt, and others. Thus, their works, in terms of critical evaluation of the original *Sahih Bukhari*, hold little value.

Anyone who contemplates this statement will see how Manjana, through his study, tries to highlight that *Sahih al-Bukhari* was gradually compiled over time. Each scholar who dealt with this book added or removed material until it settled into its final form—according to Manjana—during the middle of the 4th century AH, more than 300 years after the death of Bukhari.

He supports this claim by presenting a set of evidence related to his students, and he mentions, among other things: "To the best of my knowledge, there is no word indicating the existence of a written document in the handwriting of this narrator. Another important point to note here is that there were many oral accounts of al-Farbari, who was a contemporary of Bukhari and from whom he heard. These were transmitted by his students, al-Murazi and al-Kushaymi, and were passed on, either in writing or orally, to the later hadith scholars. We have drawn attention to three oral narratives: two from the printed text and one from the current manuscript.

Later narrators integrated these oral sayings of al-Farbari into the *Sahih* text itself, and thus, it now contains many words that did not initially come from Bukhari himself. Some of these words were likely written by some early narrators as essential notes in the text, which later became embodied in the *Sahih* through many later narrators, such as Abu Dharr and Abu al-Waqt. In particular, in the manuscript we are examining, the author refers to the oral sayings of al-Farbari as foreign additions to Bukhari's text. Despite this, many modern manuscripts incorporate al-Farbari's sayings as though they are part of the original *Sahih* (in its original form).

These additions were not denied by Dr. Mohammed bin Fares Al-Salom in his refutation of Manjana's doubts. Instead, he tried to downplay their significance, acknowledging their presence by saying: "These additions are very few, and most of them concern the identification of important terms or the narration of a word he heard from Bukhari that is outside the hadith.

After this, we raise a microscopic question here about whether this copy brought by Manjana really belongs to al-Murazi, al-Farbari's student and the owner of the famous dream that we mentioned in the chapter on the legend of Bukhari, where he saw the Prophet in a dream and was instructed to study his book. When he asked about his book, the Prophet in the dream told him that his book was *Sahih al-Bukhari*. So, what is the evidence used to determine who the owner of this copy is? In answering this question, Sheikh Dr. Ahmed bin Fares Al-Salom also addresses the study of Manjana's copy, published on a Hadith website. In an excerpt, he says:

"It was not clear to me who wrote the copy, nor is there anything in the manuscript that indicates it. However, it is extremely precise, and it has been compared and reviewed, as indicated by the corrections on the margins of the manuscript and the marks indicating the comparison process."

He continues,

"I could not determine the date of its copying, except that the narrations and chains of transmission recorded at the beginning of the manuscript indicate the period following its writing, as you will see shortly. Generally speaking, the handwriting resembles the style of the late 4th century, and Allah knows best."

Thus, Sheikh Ahmed bin Fares Al-Salom confirms in a very clear and definite manner that Manjana's copy has no indication of being from al-Murazi's manuscript, nor is there anything in the copy to suggest it. So why do these people fill us with speculative talk about a copy from Manjana with the narration of al-Murazi? Meanwhile, its copy is not marked with his name, and there is no indication of it. It becomes clear that even the date of this manuscript's copying is not recorded on it.

How did these people recognize that it was the copy of al-Murazi or his narration? And how did they determine the manuscript's date? Did they rely on scientific chemical methods to determine the manuscript's age? No, not at all; they only relied on guesswork, using assumptions that don't provide any certainty about the truth. In this regard, Sheikh Ahmed bin Fares Al-Salom, while defending Manjana's copy of *Sahih al-Bukhari*, says:

"As for what was mentioned in Manjana's study, which was followed by Sazkin and others in determining the date of its writing as 370 AH, I did not find any indication of this in the manuscript. Manjana inferred it as shown in his study, but no text supports this. He placed it one year before the death of Abu Zayd, who died in 371 AH, so he assumed the manuscript was written during his time to clarify his name in it, making it one year before his death."

He continues,

"However, the presence of the writing style and the date on the manuscript could suggest this date. It indicates that the manuscript was written in the lifetime of Abu Zayd, or at least during the lifetime of a narrator from Abu Zayd. The first possibility is more likely because if the manuscript belonged to a narrator from him, his name would have been explicitly mentioned. However, it is not possible to confirm the date due to the incomplete nature of the manuscript. Perhaps the missing pages contained information about the date and the name of the writer and narrator. However, the earliest confirmed transmission on this manuscript was dated to Ramadan of 464 AH, approximately 94 years after Abu Zayd's death."

This statement from Dr. Ahmed bin Fares Al-Salom clarifies that there is no indication in Manjana's manuscript regarding the date of copying or who made the copy. The claim that it was copied during al-Murazi's time is based solely on assumption. They are guessing, and their assertion that the manuscript was copied one year before al-Murazi's death, around 370 AH (114 years after Bukhari's death), is speculative. The truth is that the earliest confirmed transmission occurred much later, in 464 AH.

The manuscript we are discussing, which is associated with Manjana, is not a complete copy of *Sahih al-Bukhari* but rather covers a small part of it. As noted by Sheikh Ahmed bin Fares Al-Salom, this copy only contains 52 pages, a small fraction compared to the full *Sahih al-Bukhari* that we know today. Additionally, many people are unaware that this manuscript has a different title than the one commonly known for *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

Sheikh Ahmed bin Fares further elaborates on the manuscript, explaining that it is referred to as "the second part of the correct collection of Hadiths of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) and his Sunnah." This is different from the title commonly known, which is *Al-Jami' al-Sahih* by Imam al-Bukhari. This manuscript even explicitly states:

"The second part of the correct collection of Hadiths of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and his Sunnah."

This discrepancy in the title shows that this manuscript is considered a fragment of *Sahih al-Bukhari* and is not the complete work. The title mentioned on it is also different from the well-known one that scholars like Sheikh Al-Salom and others have recognized. However, some scholars and clerics still regard it as one of the oldest versions of *Sahih al-Bukhari*, despite the uncertainties and gaps in the historical context of the manuscript.

Indeed, the manuscript attributed to Abu Zayd al-Marzī and famously known as the "Manjana version" does not present a direct, definitive connection to Imam al-Bukhari. As you mentioned, it does not form an unbroken or categorical link with *Sahih al-Bukhari* as we know it today. This distinction leads us to explore the significant differences between this particular manuscript and the other existing copies of *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

As we delve into this issue in the final part of this book, the discrepancies between the Manjana version and the known copies of *Sahih al-Bukhari* will be analyzed. We will focus on how these variations reveal nuances in the history, transmission, and authority of the text, shedding light on the complexities surrounding the manuscript's attribution and its place within the larger tradition of *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

Sahih al-Bukhari and his Students

Indeed, when discussing *Sahih al-Bukhari* and its attribution to Imam Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, we must also address the crucial role of his students and the students of his students. It is well-known that Imam al-Bukhari had thousands of students who took from him the knowledge contained in *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Therefore, this section focuses on what these students and their successors have conveyed about the book, aiming to determine whether the *Sahih al-Bukhari* we have today truly reflects the work of Imam al-Bukhari or if, over time, changes and additions were made by other scribes that transformed it into what we now have.

One of the common defenses from scholars who advocate for *Sahih al-Bukhari*'s authenticity is the claim that ninety thousand students heard the book directly from Imam al-Bukhari. This narrative comes from one of his famous students, Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Furbari (d. 320 AH). According to this account, *Sahih al-Bukhari* was transmitted by Imam al-Bukhari himself to tens of thousands, making the chain of transmission (isnad) sound and robust.

However, this raises significant questions about the logistics of such widespread transmission. If we assume, for the sake of argument, that Imam al-Bukhari taught his book to one hundred students per month, it would have taken him over 75 years to impart the entire *Sahih* to ninety thousand students. This timeline exceeds the number of years Imam al-Bukhari lived, presenting a paradox in the claim of such massive and simultaneous transmission.

Thus, while the claim of widespread transmission through countless students strengthens the book's authority, it also invites skepticism about the practicality of this transmission process, particularly when considered against the timeline of al-Bukhari’s life and the historical context. It compels us to examine how these claims align with the actual structure and transmission of the book across generations.

But the strangest thing is that these 90,000 students did not leave us a single copy of Sahih al-Bukhari. It is supposed that we should find thousands of manuscripts left by these students in libraries around the world. However, the reality we face is that the 90,000 students of Bukhari did not leave us any copies, and Bukhari's student, al-Faribri, confirms that Bukhari taught this number of students the book "Al-Jami' al-Sahih."

What's even more surprising and strange is that these 90,000 students were supposed to have their own students as well. If each of them had taught just ten students, Sahih al-Bukhari, we would have ended up with 900,000 students. Consequently, in the second generation of Bukhari’s students, there would be 900,000 manuscripts of Sahih al-Bukhari. Yet, there is not a single manuscript in the world attributed to any of Bukhari's students' students. This raises the legitimate question about the truth of the claims made by those who argue for the authenticity of this book attributed to him. The glaring reality confirms that there is no transmission of this book from Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, which forces us to reconsider the claims that the "Sahih al-Bukhari" we have today is indeed from this man.

Moreover, there is no need to delve deeply into the debate about the story of the 90,000 students who supposedly learned Sahih al-Bukhari from Bukhari. What we must confirm is that according to the famous historian Al-Dhahabi, the narration from al-Faribri is not authentic. Al-Dhahabi's statement clarifies this issue, stating, "It is narrated – but it is not authentic – that al-Faribri said: 'I heard Sahih al-Bukhari from Bukhari, and the narration from Bukhari passed to many men, but no one is able to narrate it other than me.'"

However, he did not mention this in the matter of the 90,000 students, and he also did not claim that anyone other than al-Faribri narrated the Sahih from Bukhari. However, the reality we face now is that there is not a single copy of Sahih al-Bukhari in the world written by al-Faribri or his peer, al-Nasfi, as some try to suggest by recounting such narratives.

Since the scholars, who represent the religious authority, are often keen on citing the sayings of the scholars, treating them as sacred words beyond discussion, and since they tend to support their critiques of Bukhari by referencing his students, we also turn to these students for judgment. We will accept their ruling as long as our scholars only accept discussions based on the sayings of the early scholars, considering them as evidence beyond dispute. Thus, we are also happy to align with them in this matter on the condition that we meet them on common ground. Therefore, I am pleased to share the students' testimony regarding Sahih al-Bukhari.

In the introduction to the book *Al-Fath*, it is mentioned: "Hafiz Abu Ishaq said: 'I copied Bukhari's book from the original manuscript of his student Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Faribri, and in it, I found things that were incomplete and things that were clarified, such as chapter headings that were not confirmed and hadiths that were not translated.' So we added some of these to some others."

From this text, we can conclude that the person copying affirms that he copied the book *Sahih al-Bukhari* from its original manuscript, meaning from Bukhari's own manuscript, which was with his student al-Faribri. However, after that, he affirms that he found the book incomplete, meaning that Bukhari died before completing his *Sahih*. The copier explains this in detail, stating: "I found things that were incomplete, such as chapter headings that were not confirmed and hadiths that were not translated, so we added some of these to others." Thus, Bukhari did not complete his book, and it remained unfinished, with the students and their students intervening when they found chapter headings that had no hadiths attached to them, and hadiths that had not been translated. They added some of these to others. This testimony from the copier, as conveyed by him, clarifies the matter.

Al-Baji, and as narrated by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, confirms to us, beyond any doubt, that the students interfered in the book, made changes, and altered it after they realized that it had not yet been completed. However, the scholars seek strange justifications to explain this clear and obvious statement. Based on this, we can understand that the *Sahih al-Bukhari* we have today:

1. Bukhari died before he completed his book.
2. *Sahih al-Bukhari* was never finished.
3. There are chapter headings in *Sahih al-Bukhari* that were never confirmed.
4. There are hadiths in *Sahih al-Bukhari* that were never translated.
5. The students added some hadiths to certain chapter headings that had no hadiths attached to them.

From these points, it is clear that the *Sahih al-Bukhari* we have today is not the exact work of Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari—at least not in its original form. The students and their students interfered in the book, adding, subtracting, and altering it.

I do not know how the scholars will accept this statement, especially since the scholars consider their words infallible and beyond debate in this matter. To corroborate and emphasize our point, we quote what Abu al-Walid al-Baji said to confirm the words of these students, as is mentioned in *Al-Tadleel wa al-Tajreeh* (Volume 1, page 310):

"Abu al-Walid al-Baji said: One of the indications of the truth of this statement is the narration of Abu Ishaq al-Mustamli, Abu Muhammad al-Sarkhasi, Abu al-Haytham al-Kushmiyani, and Abu Zayd al-Marwazi. Their narrations differ in the order of words, even though they are copied from the same original! This happened because each of them assumed that the text contained something added on some additional margin or page, so they added it. This is evident because you will find two or more chapter headings connected with hadiths, which do not have a connection."

The surprising thing here is that the scholar al-Malik ibn al-Baji, who lived between 403 AH (July 1012) and 474 AH (April 1081), confirms that the copies of these students were indeed different from each other.

Although they copied from a single original manuscript, *Sahih al-Bukhari,* written by its author himself, how can it be possible that these copies from the same origin became so different? Al-Baji explains the matter by saying: "This happened because each of them assumed that something was added in a certain part or margin of the manuscript, so they included it." This clarification shows that multiple chapter headings exist, yet there is no connection between them and the hadiths.

Thus, even among the prominent scholars of hadith, it is firmly confirmed that the students altered and added to the *Sahih al-Bukhari* during its transmission, eventually leading to the form we have today. However, one must ask: Who can truly believe this statement and stop attributing divine sanctity to a book that is regarded as infallible after the Qur'an? There are those who go as far as declaring anyone who rejects a hadith from it as an apostate without hesitating to do so. They fail to show respect for God or His creation and do not use the intellect that God gave them to reach the truth. The reality is that the scholarly works and books of Bukhari, and the ones attributed to him, should be placed in their rightful human context—one that acknowledges mistakes, forgetfulness, and human error. Sadly, in the 21st century, there are still many in our community who believe in such myths and superstitions without allowing room for research, inquiry, or even the correction of such ideas.

The multitude of sources available today confirms the idea that Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari is innocent of this book, whether partially or completely, as evidenced by the testimonies of his students, who mentioned that *Sahih al-Bukhari* was never completed and that they intervened in the book, adding their own contributions based on personal judgments. So, how can we claim that the *Sahih al-Bukhari* we hold in our hands today is truly the work of Bukhari, especially when the scholars who transmitted it to us have clearly added to the text?

Given all this, it is essential to acknowledge that what has been discussed here is not simply about scholarly critique but about the need to critically engage with sources and historical narratives, ensuring we have a clear understanding of their origins and the changes they may have undergone over time.

The copies made by his students and their students, as well as the alterations and additions they made, eventually led to versions of *Sahih al-Bukhari* that are no longer available to us today. We have thoroughly discussed this matter in the section concerning the original manuscript of *Sahih al-Bukhari*, confirming that the earliest known copy of *Sahih al-Bukhari* exists more than two centuries after the death of al-Bukhari. This copy does not carry the name of the copyist or any indications of its origin.

Further evidence and arguments supporting this claim will be presented in the remaining sections of this chapter. These points emphasize the importance of understanding the historical transmission of such texts, the role of scribes and students in shaping the final form of the works attributed to scholars like al-Bukhari, and the challenges in verifying the authenticity and completeness of the texts we have today.

Sahih al-Bukhari and Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani

The famous historian and scholar Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, is among the most vigorous defenders and advocates of the book *Al-Jami' Al-Sahih* throughout history. His explanation of this book, *Fath al-Bari*, is one of the most famous commentaries and widely referenced by contemporary scholars. Ibn Hajar shouldered the responsibility of clarifying contradictions that arise in the book. He also attempted to address the vast criticisms directed at *Sahih al-Bukhari*. However, despite his efforts, he sometimes found himself in difficult positions that made defending the book challenging. He admitted on multiple occasions that he was forced to overextend himself in responding to critics. In this section, we will explain some of the issues that Ibn Hajar faced while defending *Al-Jami' Al-Sahih*, attributed to Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari.

He also acknowledged the many criticisms directed at the book and mentioned in the introduction to his commentary, *Fath al-Bari*, "I sought the help of Allah to provide a concise explanation that would clarify the book's benefits, with a clear explanation of its objectives, a summary of its chapters, and a presentation of the rules and principles in a manner that simplifies the complex and makes the difficult easy to understand." He laid out his approach in ten sections:

1. The reason for compiling this book.
2. Clarification of its subject and explanation of its purpose, confirming its place among the most authentic books of hadith, along with the distinction of the chapter introductions which set it apart from other works.
3. Explanation of the method of classifying and summarizing hadiths, and the benefits of repeating them.
4. Explanation of the reason for including the hadiths, actions, and reports, even though they diverge from the main subject of the book. The collection includes both the narrated hadiths and the statements of companions, with clear reference to who reported them, and presented in a concise manner.
5. Clarification of rare terms, arranged alphabetically to facilitate referencing and minimize repetition.
6. Clarification of the proper names, titles, and genealogies that are mentioned, with attention to distinguishing between common and unique names, ensuring they are easy to review and less repetitive. Other names are treated based on their root and context.
7. Defining his teachers who were omitted from the list when they were frequently mentioned, such as Muhammad, to ensure proper clarity and context within the book's framework.

8. Addressing the criticisms of certain hadiths, criticized by scholars like Abu al-Hasan al-Daraqutni and others, and explaining that they do not undermine the authenticity of the book, as shown in the rigorous methodology.
9. Providing clarification of the names of all those criticized in the book's transmission chain, ensuring fairness and objectivity in examining their reliability, and avoiding bias towards any particular individual.
10. A detailed index of the chapters, with each chapter containing hadiths listed by their numbering and order, following the methodology of the prominent scholar, Sheikh al-Islam Zakariya al-Nawawi, and including additional clarifications from Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Hajar al-Bulqini.

Here's a structured numbering of the outlined sections:

1. **Organizing the Book**: Ibn Hajar's book is meticulously arranged in alphabetical order for ease of reference. He carefully lists all the narrators and indicates the hadiths they have narrated. This helps readers trace any hadiths in an organized manner, with no repetition.
2. **Comprehensive Introduction**: The book opens with a detailed introduction that includes the context and purpose of the compilation. Ibn Hajar mentions his approach to analyzing the book's contents and the scholars' contributions to the authenticity of the hadiths.
3. **Explanation of Difficult Hadiths**: Ibn Hajar addresses the complexities of certain hadiths by providing a clear explanation. He draws from authoritative sources to clarify meanings, interpretations, and to resolve ambiguities in the text.
4. **Clarification of Arabic Terms**: Ibn Hajar offers an in-depth explanation of the linguistic terms and phrases used in the hadiths. He pays particular attention to the peculiarities of the Arabic language, helping the reader understand the nuances in the text.
5. **Clarifying Differences in Jurisprudential Opinions**: The scholar highlights the various legal opinions derived from the hadiths, noting the most widely accepted ones. His goal is to provide clarity and precision in the presentation of jurisprudential rulings.
6. **The Importance of the Hadith Narrators**: Ibn Hajar provides detailed insights into the lives of the narrators of the hadiths, addressing their reliability and contributions. He emphasizes the critical role of each narrator in preserving the authenticity of the text.
7. **Criticism and Defense of Hadith**: He addresses critiques made by scholars like al-Daraqutni, refuting those objections and justifying the inclusion of certain hadiths in *Sahih al-Bukhari*. He stresses the importance of defending the integrity of the hadith compilation.
8. **Concluding Summary**: The book concludes with a section summarizing the key points. Ibn Hajar reflects on the challenges and intricacies of defending *Sahih al-Bukhari*, acknowledging both its strengths and the criticisms it has faced over time. He emphasizes the authenticity and value of the text despite the controversies.

Each of these points reflects Ibn Hajar's intellectual efforts to answer the criticisms and defend *Sahih al-Bukhari*, while also maintaining the integrity of the hadith literature.

In this excerpt, Ibn Hajar discusses a critical issue regarding *Sahih al-Bukhari*, specifically addressing the fact that there are chapters in the book that do not contain any hadiths, verses from the Quran, or any content at all. This issue has raised debates within scholarly circles, particularly about the methodology used by Imam al-Bukhari.

Here is a summary of the key points discussed:

1. **Absence of Content in Some Chapters**: Ibn Hajar notes that Imam al-Bukhari includes chapters in *Sahih al-Bukhari* that lack hadiths or any other content. Some of these chapters only have a general statement or a reference to the Prophet (PBUH), while others contain no content at all. This absence is particularly noticeable in chapters where no hadith or even Quranic verses are cited.
2. **Ibn Hajar's Explanation**: According to Ibn Hajar, the absence of content in these chapters was intentional. Imam al-Bukhari's aim was not merely to compile a list of hadiths but to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH). The absence of hadiths in some chapters was a deliberate choice to indicate that the content of the chapter was either self-evident or did not require a hadith to establish the point being made.
3. **Criticism and Misinterpretation**: Some critics have accused Imam al-Bukhari of leaving these chapters empty deliberately, to show that he could not find hadiths to support the chapter's heading. However, Ibn Hajar rejects this interpretation, clarifying that Imam al-Bukhari's goal was to provide evidence for the chapter's theme without always needing to present a specific hadith.
4. **Implications for the Integrity of *Sahih al-Bukhari***: These challenges and questions reflect broader issues in the reception of *Sahih al-Bukhari*. The book has been the subject of praise, but also scrutiny. Some have elevated its status to an almost mythical level, while others have pointed out its flaws, including issues with the narrators and specific hadiths. Ibn Hajar argues that while these critiques exist, the true value of *Sahih al-Bukhari* lies in its comprehensive and methodical approach to hadith compilation, despite its imperfections.
5. **Conclusion**: Ibn Hajar concludes that the absence of content in certain chapters of *Sahih al-Bukhari* is a result of Imam al-Bukhari's unique approach to hadith compilation and should not be seen as a flaw or weakness of the book. This complexity highlights the scholarly depth of the work and the intricate decisions made by Imam al-Bukhari during its compilation.

In this context, Ibn Hajar is defending Imam al-Bukhari's methodological choices while acknowledging that some aspects of *Sahih al-Bukhari* have generated considerable debate among scholars.

In this part of the text, Ibn Hajar continues to critique *Sahih al-Bukhari* and discusses issues with the way Imam al-Bukhari compiled the hadiths in his book, especially in terms of their organization and presentation. Here's a breakdown of the key points:

1. **Disjointed Hadiths**: Ibn Hajar mentions that Imam al-Bukhari sometimes includes hadiths in a chapter of *Sahih al-Bukhari* even when the hadith does not seem directly related to the chapter's subject. This can result in a lack of clarity or coherence in the thematic presentation of the book. Sometimes, Bukhari would include parts of a hadith scattered across multiple chapters rather than presenting it in its entirety, which could detract from the meaning and value of the hadith.
2. **Imam Bukhari's Methodology**: Ibn Hajar notes that Imam al-Bukhari's approach was driven by his desire to extract legal rulings and lessons (i.e., *istimbat al-ahkam*) from hadiths and to structure them in a way that served his broader goal. This led to the division of hadiths and sometimes to their presentation without full context. This methodology was necessary for Imam Bukhari's aim of highlighting the principles behind the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), but it occasionally caused confusion due to the way hadiths were cut and distributed across chapters.
3. **Criticism from Scholars**: Some scholars, like Abu Ali al-Naysaburi, criticized Imam Bukhari for his approach. They argued that Bukhari's method of cutting hadiths into parts for the sake of thematic organization, and not presenting them in full, affected the authenticity and meaning of the hadith. Abu Ali questioned whether Bukhari's work could truly be called *Sahih* in the same way that other collections were regarded as authentic, and some scholars viewed this as a flaw in Bukhari's methodology.
4. **Defending Imam Bukhari**: Ibn Hajar argues that while these criticisms may seem valid at first glance, they do not undermine the authenticity of *Sahih al-Bukhari* as a whole. He acknowledges that there were challenges with how the hadiths were presented but emphasizes that Imam Bukhari's ultimate goal was to convey the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH) effectively, even if his methods did not always align with the expectations of later scholars.
5. **Comparing with *Sahih Muslim***: Ibn Hajar contrasts *Sahih al-Bukhari* with *Sahih Muslim* and notes that while *Sahih Muslim* may have been more systematic and precise in its organization, Imam Muslim also had to make choices regarding which narrations to include and how to structure them. This comparison is used to further explain that the choices made by Imam al-Bukhari were consistent with his scholarly goals and did not undermine the value of his work.
6. **Cultural and Scholarly Perspectives**: Ibn Hajar also touches upon different perspectives from scholars across regions, including some Moroccan scholars, who criticized Bukhari's work. These scholars might have expressed doubt regarding the *Sahih* status of Bukhari's compilation, but Ibn Hajar refutes this by pointing out that Bukhari's decisions were scholarly and aimed at the highest standards of hadith verification.

Conclusion

In this passage, Ibn Hajar provides a nuanced defense of Imam Bukhari's methods, recognizing both the criticisms and the reasons behind Bukhari's choices. He emphasizes that *Sahih al-Bukhari* remains a valuable and authentic collection despite some aspects of its organization and methodology that might seem unconventional or problematic to certain critics.

Ibn Hajar continues his analysis of Sahih al-Bukhari and discusses several issues related to the compilation and transmission of hadiths, particularly focusing on the differences in wording and the way hadiths are presented across different narrations.

Key Points:

1. **Preference for *Sahih Muslim* Over Sahih Bukhari***:* Ibn Hajar mentions that some of his teachers preferred *Sahih Muslim* over *Sahih al-Bukhari*, primarily due to the way *Sahih Muslim* was organized and the clarity of its transmission compared to the sometimes disjointed presentation of Sahih al-Bukhari.
2. **The Influence of Regional Scholars**: He also refers to scholars in the Maghreb (North Africa) who preferred to rely on *Sahih Muslim* over *Sahih Bukhari* because *Sahih Muslim* presents the full chain of narrators and complete narrations of the hadiths, whereas *Sahih Bukhari* often breaks up narrations by splitting them into different chains or versions. These scholars were particularly critical of how *Sahih Bukhari* sometimes altered the wording of hadiths by presenting them in fragmented forms, which could obscure their original meaning and context.
3. **Fragmentation of Hadiths in *Sahih Bukhari***: Ibn Hajar discusses how *Sahih Bukhari* often presents the same hadith through multiple chains (sanad) or with different wordings (lafz). This method, while preserving the authenticity of the hadith through different narrations, can also lead to confusion or a sense of inconsistency in the text. Some hadiths may be presented in different forms, which can give the impression that there is a discrepancy or error in the narration.
4. **The Role of the Transmitters**: Ibn Hajar acknowledges the role of the *nukkal* (transcribers) in shaping the final form of hadith collections. He notes that errors or variations in the transmission of hadiths may have occurred during the copying process, with transcribers introducing their own interpretations or slight changes to the text. This could explain some of the differences in wording that are found in various versions of a single hadith.
5. **The Importance of Context**: Ibn Hajar emphasizes the importance of understanding the context in which a hadith is transmitted. While *Sahih Bukhari* may sometimes present hadiths in a fragmented way, these variations serve to highlight different aspects or interpretations of the same hadith. The aim was not to distort the hadith but to demonstrate its broader implications and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH).
6. **Recognition of Scholarly Debate**: Ibn Hajar also acknowledges that these issues were the subject of scholarly debate in the 9th century (the 3rd century AH). Scholars at that time were deeply concerned with the methods used by hadith compilers like Bukhari, and Ibn Hajar's extensive citation of these debates in *Fath al-Bari* underscores the complexity of the issue. This discussion about the compilation methods of *Sahih al-Bukhari* was central to the intellectual debates of the time, as scholars sought to preserve the integrity and authenticity of the hadith literature.

7. **Acknowledging the Influence of Multiple Scholars**: Ibn Hajar points out that the differences in the narration and transmission of hadiths in *Sahih Bukhari* reflect the involvement of various scholars and narrators who contributed to the development of the text. He argues that these variations are not necessarily signs of error but are indicative of the different scholarly methods and approaches to hadith transmission.

Conclusion:

Ibn Hajar addresses the complexities of how hadiths are presented in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, acknowledging both the criticisms leveled against the book and the reasons behind Bukhari's methodology. He defends the authenticity of *Sahih al-Bukhari* despite these challenges, emphasizing that the differences in wording and transmission reflect the careful and scholarly approach that Imam Bukhari took in compiling the work. Furthermore, he recognizes that these issues were the subject of ongoing debate among scholars during his time and that they continue to be a matter of scholarly discussion.

In this section, Ibn Hajar addresses a significant issue regarding the transmission and preservation of *Sahih al-Bukhari*. He notes that he found no specific section dedicated to the virtues (manāqib) of certain prominent companions of the Prophet Muhammad, such as Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf and Said ibn Zayd, who are part of the *'Asharah Mubasharah* (the ten companions promised paradise). This omission raises an interesting point about how hadiths were recorded and transmitted.

Key Points:

1. **Omission of Certain Virtues**: Ibn Hajar comments that despite the importance of companions like Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf and Said ibn Zayd, *Sahih al-Bukhari* does not dedicate a specific chapter (or translation) to their virtues. He suggests that this might be due to how the text was transmitted over time, particularly by the copyists of *Sahih al-Bukhari*.
2. **Handling of *Sahih al-Bukhari* by Later Transmitters**: Ibn Hajar suggests that the omission of certain details in *Sahih al-Bukhari* could be attributed to the actions of the transmitters of the book. Since Imam Bukhari compiled his book in a specific way, later transcribers might have added or omitted details as they saw fit. He hypothesizes that some of these decisions were likely influenced by the copyists and the context in which the transmission took place.
3. **Lack of Consideration for Order or Virtue**: Ibn Hajar emphasizes that the arrangement in *Sahih al-Bukhari* does not always adhere strictly to an order based on the virtues, seniority, or precedence of the companions. Rather, the book's structure is more thematic, with each hadith grouped according to its subject matter. The order of the companions mentioned is not based on their rank in the early Muslim community or their individual virtues. This lack of consideration for the status or rank of companions in the organization of the book is one reason for some of the apparent inconsistencies.
4. **Multiple Versions of *Sahih al-Bukhari***: Ibn Hajar addresses a significant challenge in the study of *Sahih al-Bukhari*—the existence of multiple versions of the text. By the time of Ibn Hajar in the 9th century (six centuries after Imam Bukhari's death), there was no single, standardized copy of *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Instead, several versions existed, each with slight differences in wording or transmission.
    - **The Role of the Copyists**: He highlights that there were several copies of the book, with each copy potentially containing variations based on the transmitters' choices. The discrepancies among these versions could affect how certain hadiths were understood or interpreted.
    - **Focusing on the Best Version**: Ibn Hajar suggests that, given the variations among the manuscripts, scholars should focus on the most reliable versions. He specifically endorses the version transmitted by Abu Dharr al-Harawi, which he considers to be the most precise and well-preserved. While other versions may be consulted when they contradict this version, the primary reliance should be on Abu Dharr's transmission.

5. **The Misconception of a Unified *Sahih al-Bukhari***: Ibn Hajar acknowledges that many people mistakenly believe there is a single, unified version of *Sahih al-Bukhari*. However, he clarifies that, in fact, there were multiple versions, each with its own set of variations. This realization complicates the understanding of the text, and it is important for scholars to recognize these differences when engaging with *Sahih al-Bukhari*.
6. **Creating a New Version of *Sahih al-Bukhari***: Based on the existing versions, Ibn Hajar's work on *Fath al-Bari* essentially creates a new "version" of *Sahih al-Bukhari* by synthesizing the most reliable and accurate elements of the available manuscripts. He aims to offer a more consistent and clear version by relying primarily on the most trustworthy narrations while also noting variations where necessary.

Conclusion:

Ibn Hajar's observations underscore the complexity of the transmission of *Sahih al-Bukhari* and the challenges involved in preserving its authenticity. The variations between different manuscripts of the book reflect the process of transmission over centuries, which was influenced by the choices of copyists and the lack of a standardized version in the early centuries. Ibn Hajar's reliance on Abu Dharr's transmission highlights his commitment to accuracy and authenticity as he attempts to navigate the complexities of *Sahih al-Bukhari*'s transmission history. This discussion not only illuminates the scholarly challenges faced in understanding *Sahih al-Bukhari*, but also emphasizes the importance of considering different versions and their contexts when engaging with hadith literature.

The passages discuss a critical issue in the history of *Sahih al-Bukhari*, particularly concerning the authenticity and transmission of the text over time. Ibn Hajar mentions that there were multiple versions or manuscripts of *Sahih al-Bukhari*, each differing from the others in some way. This is significant because, as you rightly point out, there is no surviving manuscript that was directly written by the author, Imam Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, or by his students in the exact form we have it today.

Key Points of the Discussion:

1. **Absence of Original Manuscripts**: Ibn Hajar acknowledges that there is no surviving manuscript written by Imam Bukhari himself or his direct disciples. The versions of *Sahih al-Bukhari* that we possess today are not the original manuscripts authored by Bukhari or his companions but are rather later copies and transmissions that underwent revisions, additions, and sometimes deletions over time.
2. **The Myth of the Single Authored *Sahih al-Bukhari***: The notion that the *Sahih al-Bukhari* we have today is exactly the same as the one compiled by Imam Bukhari is considered a misconception or myth. The idea that this is the singular, unaltered work of Bukhari does not hold up upon scrutiny, as there is no single, original manuscript that has survived. Instead, we have multiple copies and versions of the text, all stemming from different branches of transmission.
3. **Transmission of *Sahih al-Bukhari* Over Time**: Over the centuries, the text of *Sahih al-Bukhari* was copied and transmitted by numerous scholars, copyists, and students. Each of these versions might include slight variations in wording, arrangement, and sometimes even in the inclusion of certain hadiths. As the text was copied by different hands, it inevitably faced variations, especially given the lack of a standardized and universally accepted manuscript in the early centuries.
4. **The Challenge of Verifying Authenticity**: Ibn Hajar's analysis shows that scholars, including himself, faced the challenge of verifying which version of *Sahih al-Bukhari* was most authentic. Since the original manuscript was not available, Ibn Hajar chose to rely on the version of *Sahih al-Bukhari* that he deemed to be the most reliable—specifically the version transmitted by Abu Dharr al-Harawi—while also considering differences in the other manuscripts when necessary.
5. **Implications for the Modern Reader**: For contemporary readers and scholars, this insight highlights an important point: *Sahih al-Bukhari*, as we know it today, is not the result of a single, unaltered manuscript. Rather, it is the product of a long process of transmission and redaction. Understanding this fact helps contextualize some of the variations in the text and provides a clearer picture of the challenges scholars face in preserving the authenticity of hadith literature.

Conclusion:

The absence of an original manuscript written by Imam Bukhari himself does indeed complicate the understanding of the *Sahih al-Bukhari*. However, this does not undermine its significance or authenticity, as the book has undergone rigorous transmission and scholarly review over the centuries. Ibn Hajar's comments serve as an important reminder that *Sahih al-Bukhari*, like many classical texts, has been passed down through multiple channels, each contributing to the version we read today. Therefore, the modern text is a composite of these transmissions, rather than the work of a single, original manuscript from Bukhari himself.

Variations in the Manuscripts of Sahih al-Bukhari

One of the critical challenges directed at the book *Sahih al-Bukhari* is the issue of manuscript variations. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani mentions in the introduction to his *Fath al-Bari*, "Abu al-Walid al-Baji said: 'The evidence for the correctness of this statement is that the narration of Abu Ishaq al-Mustamli, and the narration of Abu Muhammad al-Kharsisi, and the narration of Abu Ya'la al-Haytham, and the narration of Abu Zayd al-Muradi, they all differ with respect to the addition of commentary and the sequence, even though they were copied from the same original source, but the addition or alteration made by each one is reflected in the versions they transmitted. This shows that you may encounter two or more translations (versions) with connected hadiths between them.'"

The differences in the manuscripts or narrations of *Sahih al-Bukhari* are undeniable and significant, to the point where no researcher can deny them. These variations are not trivial and cannot be ignored, even if Ibn Hajar and others attempted to downplay the extent of the differences. The variations in the manuscripts strongly suggest that the *Sahih al-Bukhari* we have today cannot be definitively attributed to Imam Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari's original work. The differences in these manuscripts provide substantial evidence that the version we have today may not be the exact version authored by Imam Bukhari but rather one that has undergone modifications through various copyists and editors.

This idea is also acknowledged by Sheikh Mahmoud Abu Rayya in his famous book *Adhwa' al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyya*, where he states: "The narrations of Bukhari differ in number. The number of hadiths in the narration of al-Farabi exceeds the number in the narration of Ibrahim ibn Ma'qil al-Nasafi by two hundred."

This statement further highlights that there is no singular, unaltered manuscript of *Sahih al-Bukhari*, and the variations found across different versions point to the complexity of its transmission through the centuries.

The narration in the manuscript of al-Bukhari differs by a hundred hadiths compared to the version narrated by Hamad bin Shaka, as mentioned by al-Iraqi. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, in the introduction to *Fath al-Bari*, states that the total number of connected hadiths in Bukhari without repetition is 2602, while the number of interrupted hadiths is 159. This brings the total to 2761. In his commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhari*, he mentions that, according to his revision, the number is 2513 hadiths.

This variation in numbers has led researchers to question the true nature of Bukhari's compilation. The issue is further complicated by the context of the critiques and the labeling of those who attempt to expose this truth, as they are often met with harsh opposition.

Ibn Hajar emphasizes this issue in *Fath al-Bari*, in the section titled "The Reading and Presentation of Hadith." He notes: "Note: In the Baghdad version, which was corrected by the linguist al-Qadhi Muhammad bin al-Saghani, after listening to it from the teacher Abu al-Waqt and comparing it with several manuscripts, he added marks after the statement 'Ruwaahu Musa and Ali bin Abdul Hamid.' He mentioned that this hadith is absent from all manuscripts except the one that was read to al-Farabi, the companion of al-Bukhari, and there is a notation in his handwriting." He adds in a footnote: "This hadith is missing from all the manuscripts I reviewed. Allah knows best."

Similarly, in *Fath al-Bari*, page 501, under the chapter "The Revenge of Allah Almighty on His Creation through Famine When His Sanctities Are Violated," it is noted: "This translation occurred only in the version of al-Hamawi, devoid of any hadith or narrations." Ibn Rushid mentions that this may have originally been on a separate sheet, which was overlooked by later transcribers, and perhaps it was intended to include the hadith of Abdullah bin Mas'ud, found in the second chapter of *Istisqa* (prayer for rain), though it seems that Bukhari did not include it for some reason.

In a research paper published by the University of Jordan titled "Criticized Narrations Due to Differences in Manuscripts of Sahih al-Bukhari," the following was mentioned: "The difference in manuscripts of *Sahih al-Bukhari* refers to the discrepancies that occurred between the narrators of *Sahih al-Bukhari* from Imam al-Bukhari, whether the cause was the narrators directly from Bukhari or the narrators from the second or third generations of *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Scholars did not only point out the differences between the narrators of the first generation from Bukhari but also the differences that occurred in the manuscripts of famous narrators such as Ibrahim bin Ma'qal al-Nisfi (d. 294 AH), Hamad bin Shakar (d. 311 AH), and Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Yusuf al-Farabi (d. 320 AH). They also pointed out the differences that occurred between the narrators of al-Farabi’s generation—such as Abu Zayd Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Mawrazi (d. 371 AH), Abu Ahmad Muhammad bin Maki al-Jurjani, Abu Ali Said bin al-Sakan (d. 353 AH), Abu Muhammad al-Hamawi (d. 381 AH), Abu al-Haytham Muhammad bin Maki al-Kashmihin (d. 389 AH), and Abu Ishaq Ibrahim bin Ahmad bin Ibrahim al-Mustamli (d. 376

AH)—and other narrators from the second generation. Moreover, they highlighted the differences in the third generation of narrators from al-Farabi, covering discrepancies in the chain of narration, the text, the titles, biographies, and other forms of variations."

The same source continues: "Among the famous narrators from the third generation who the scholars highlighted as having differences in their manuscripts of *Sahih al-Bukhari* are:

1. Imam Abu Muhammad Abdullah bin Ibrahim al-‘Asili (d. 392 AH), who narrates from two of al-Farabi’s companions: Abu Zayd al-Mawrazi and Abu Ahmad al-Jurjani.
2. Imam Abu al-Hasan Ali bin Muhammad al-Qabbasi (d. 403 AH), who narrates from two of al-Farabi’s companions, Abu Zayd al-Mawrazi and Abu Ahmad al-Jurjani, among others.
3. Imam Abu Dharr al-Harith bin Ahmad (d. 434 AH), who narrates from the *Sahih*..."

The research paper also discusses the differences between the narrators of *Sahih al-Bukhari*, particularly those who transmitted the work from al-Farabi. It highlights that the manuscript of al-Farabi became widely known and preferred over others due to his unique transmission. Al-Farabi had heard *Sahih al-Bukhari* twice from Imam al-Bukhari: first in 248 AH in *Farbari* and again in 250 AH in *Bukhara*.

The paper then mentions discrepancies found in *Kitab Fada'il al-Sahaba* (The Book of the Virtues of the Companions), particularly in the chapter on the virtues of the family of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Some of the identified differences include:

1. **Omission of a translation and a hadith**: The translation of the chapter was missing in some versions, along with a suspended hadith about Fatimah (may Allah be pleased with her). Ibn Hajar notes that this missing hadith was added in versions of the text by other narrators, specifically Abu Dharr, which included the statement: "Fatimah is the leader of the women of paradise." He mentions that this hadith was likely intended to be included in a separate chapter titled "The Virtues of Fatimah," which would have been more consistent with the hadith’s content.

2. **Omission of Hadiths from Mas'ud bin Mukhmarah and Aisha**: These hadiths were absent in some versions of the manuscript, such as those by Abu Dharr and al-Nisfi. However, they appeared in other versions of the chapter on the virtues of Fatimah. Ibn Hajar explains this discrepancy by stating that these differences may have been due to rearrangements of certain narrations by the manuscript transmitters, resulting in variations in the order of the content.

The research also discusses instances of mistakes or errors, such as when a narration was either mistakenly omitted or wrongly altered in the chain of transmission, like the omission of Imam al-Bukhari’s narration from the *Sahih* by certain narrators due to errors or misunderstandings.

These variations, whether due to differences in order, omissions, or transmission errors, are considered as part of the broader discussion of textual differences among the manuscripts of *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

The text further delves into specific differences in the transmission of *Sahih al-Bukhari* across various manuscripts and narrators:

3. **The Issue of the Name in Ibn al-Sakan's Manuscript**: In this particular manuscript, there was confusion regarding the name of one of the narrators, where the name "Ibn Zur'ara" was mistakenly attributed as a direct disciple of Imam al-Bukhari, instead of the correct "Amr ibn Zur'ara." This misattribution led to a misunderstanding in identifying the source of certain narrations.

4. **The Addition of "Haddathana" by Abu al-Hasan al-Qabisi**: Abu al-Hasan al-Qabisi, in his transmission, added the phrase *"Haddathana Muhammad ibn Falyah"* (He told us Muhammad ibn Falyah) before continuing with the usual chain of transmission. This addition, however, created confusion because Imam al-Bukhari did not meet Muhammad ibn Falyah, leading to a misinterpretation of the narration. As a result, while the hadith remained valid, the phrasing was incorrect, and the hadith is more accurately transmitted in a suspended form (*mu'allaq*) by the group of narrators rather than directly.

5. **Differences in Transmission and Criticism**: The text also references the book *Taqyid al-Mahmal* by Imam Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad al-Gisani (known as al-Jiyani), who critiqued the discrepancies in *Sahih al-Bukhari*. The work highlighted several differences in the narrations and their transmission, laying out these issues in a table in the following pages, which shed light on specific variations that occurred across different manuscripts.

In essence, the variations mentioned are related to different interpretations and errors in transmission by various narrators, including those who added unnecessary phrases or misidentified narrators. These discrepancies form part of the broader scholarly critique of *Sahih al-Bukhari* and contribute to the ongoing discussion around the authenticity and transmission of the hadiths.

The text emphasizes that all of the manuscripts and versions of *Sahih al-Bukhari* mentioned earlier do not possess original copies written by the hands of the original narrators. Instead, they are merely copies attributed to them, often created by scribes, most of whom are unknown. Despite this, certain scholars insist that *Sahih al-Bukhari* is the work of Imam Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, overlooking these facts and presenting them to readers in a way that invites further examination and judgment.

The passage essentially raises the question of authenticity and credibility, inviting scholars and readers to critically assess the manuscripts and versions of *Sahih al-Bukhari* in light of historical and transmission facts. It suggests that there may be discrepancies and potential errors in how these versions have been passed down, encouraging readers to reflect on the issue of accuracy in the transmission of such important texts.

Who authored Sahih al-Bukhari?

It is important to question the true author of *Sahih al-Bukhari* after the analysis we have conducted based on the strong evidence available. The conclusion seems to point toward an unknown author. There is no original manuscript, nor even a portion of one, written in the hand of *Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari*. There is also no manuscript or part of one from his students, nor any manuscript from the students of his students in the entire world.

What we are left with is a strange book of unknown origin. Even those who claim to have transmitted *Sahih al-Bukhari* to later generations affirm that what was authored by the Sheikh, al-Bukhari, was an incomplete work. It was published incompletely, of his own will, based on his own narrations as received from their books and from their teachers. These scholars, who we now consider authoritative, altered the original book written by al-Bukhari, adding, deleting, and rearranging parts of it.

The text tells us that the versions of the book handed down to us differ and contradict each other. We face a real dilemma, as all the hadith scholars know this, yet they ignore it, deceive the masses, and hide the bitter truth. All of this is done to sustain religious authority, which relies on such myths to maintain its existence. This is why it cannot do without this heritage, which has roots in extremism and should be eradicated. Research like this reveals the truth of what these scholars are attempting to promote in place of the Book of God. Even though I have spent long hours listening to the speeches of these clerics, they rarely cite even one verse from the Word of God, while they constantly quote such and such person’s words, elevating them to the level of sanctity.

They justify it with the cloak of infallibility, as much as is available to them and as much as is not available.

Therefore, it is our right to tell them that *Sahih al-Bukhari* is a book of unknown authorship with no origins and no real existence. It is a book without parentage, a collection of various sayings and ideas that were inserted into it by those who wanted to justify their actions and strengthen their religious authority. We know that these individuals would be nothing without this book. They have no true existence apart from it, and it is their power, the foundation of their livelihood. This is why they fight to defend it with all their might, for their Islam is based on these narratives, not on the Quran that God Almighty revealed:

"These are the verses of Allah which We recite to you in truth. Then in what statement after Allah and His signs will they believe?" [Surah Al-Jathiya 45:6].

“Woe to every sinful liar, who hears the verses of Allah being recited to him, then persists arrogantly as if he had not heard them. So give him tidings of a painful punishment. And when he knows anything of Our verses, he takes it in mockery. For those is a humiliating punishment." [Surah Al-Jathiya 45:9].

“Behind them is Hell, and it will not avail them what they earned nor will they have any protectors besides Allah, and for them is a great punishment." [Surah Al-Jathiya 45:10].

“This is guidance. And those who disbelieve in the signs of their Lord will have a punishment of painful burning."[Surah Al-Jathiya 45:11].

And Allah is the one whose help is sought against what they describe.